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THE QUEST OF THE FOUR-LEAVED CLOVER

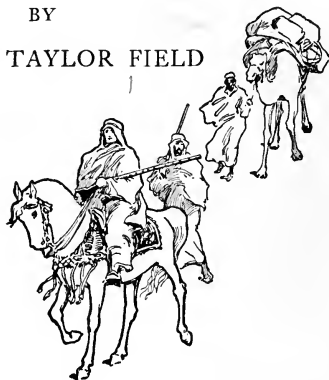
A STORY OF ARABIA



ADAPTED FROM
THE FRENCH OF LABOULAYE'S "ABDALLAH"

BY

WALTER TAYLOR FIELD



GINN AND COMPANY

BOSTON • NEW YORK • CHICAGO • LONDON

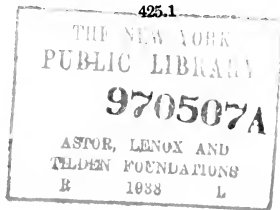
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INTRODUCTION

Arabia is to children a land of romance and enchantment. Its mysterious deserts with their half-obliterated trails and their passing caravans, its sunshine and color, its free, wild life, the swift passion of its children, always near the surface and ready to leap into instant action, — these things appeal strongly to the mind of youth; for the Arabs are a simple people and their life has all the directness and vigor of childhood.

“The Quest of the Four-Leaved Clover” shows us the Arabian character at its best. It gives a picture of Bedouin life among the tents, and, incidentally, of city life in the bazaars. But, more than this, it gives a glimpse into the spirit of one of the great world religions that is yet but little understood in Christian countries. It shows the Mohammedan faith with its fatalism and its moral earnestness, and teaches the great lesson of service to one’s fellow man. One cannot read the story without a closer feeling of brotherhood with all mankind, without a realization that life is only good as it offers opportunities for doing good. The book is thus useful in three

ways : (1) as a story ; (2) as a side light on Oriental geography, life and manners, religion and civilization ; (3) as the concrete illustration of a great moral truth.

The original story, known as "Abdallah ; or, the Four-Leaved Clover," was written in 1859 by the French scholar, Édouard René Lefebvre de Laboulaye. Its author was born in Paris in 1811, studied law, and at twenty-eight wrote an important legal work which won him high rank in his profession. In 1849 he became a professor in the Collège de France. He was an ardent lover of liberty and an admirer of American institutions. He wrote a political history of the United States, and a number of political satires : "Paris en Amérique" (1863), which ran through thirty editions ; "Contes bleus" (1864) ; "Nouveaux contes bleus" (1865) ; and "Le prince Caniche" (1865). He was a man of wide sympathies and rare personal charm, handsome and dignified in bearing, and gracious in his intercourse with his fellows. He died in 1883.

"Abdallah" was to him a labor of love. In it he escaped from his arduous professional life and found wings for his soul. He tells us in a preface to one of the later editions that, of all the books that he has written, this is his favorite, and that he feels for it a father's tenderness. Before beginning to write it he surrounded himself with Arabian and Persian books,

read the Koran twice, and made for himself an Oriental atmosphere which has been beautifully reproduced in his story. He says : " Not a precept is to be found in my book which has not been drawn from the Koran or from tradition. I have not attributed to my Abdallah an opinion, a sentiment, which has not been derived from some Mohammedan author. It is often forgotten that Mohammed was inspired by the Bible ; it is still oftener forgotten that man finds in his heart the law which demands good and which stigmatizes evil. Let us be better than the Mohammedans ; it is our duty ; but let us not deny their goodness nor their generosity. The human race is but one family. Though we differ in beliefs, we are one in heart."

The present story is an adaptation. In translating it, certain portions of the original which are distinctly offensive to American habits of thought have been omitted ; its too realistic descriptions of death and bloodshed have been softened and the thread of the story has been slightly altered to meet the changed conditions. The justification for this lies in the fact that Laboulaye wrote for an earlier generation and for an audience accustomed to somewhat lower social ideals than we demand to-day for the youth of America.

W. T. F.

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

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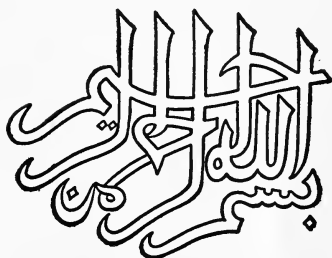
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THE QUEST OF THE FOUR-LEAVED CLOVER

PROLOGUE



This is the story that Ibn Ahmed the camel driver told us in the desert one night as we were camping together at the Well of the Benediction. Darkness was coming on ; the stars twinkled in the sky, and all the earth seemed wrapped in sleep. God alone watched over his world. Tired as we were after the heat and the travel of the day, the story came to us like a pure draft of water bringing refreshment and new life. It may serve other travelers as well, and give them also peace, pleasant dreams, and forgetfulness of care.

CHAPTER I

THE JOY OF THE HOUSE

In the wealthy city of Jedda, on the shore of the Red Sea, once dwelt an Egyptian merchant, Hajji-Mansur by name. During the Egyptian wars both armies counted upon him for provisions, arms, and camels ; and after a battle he always complained that he had ruined himself for the sake of the side that had won. It is true no one was a more zealous ally than he, nor could any one obtain so cheaply the spoils of the conquest. In this honest vocation the obliging Mansur had gained great wealth, though not without some embarrassments. The envious had denounced him as a spy ; fanatics had abused him as a traitor ; twice he would have been hanged had it not been for the kindness of a pasha who was willing, for a million piasters, to proclaim his innocence. Mansur had too brave a spirit to be frightened by these political dangers. When peace was declared, he retired to Jedda only because lawful commerce was thenceforth the road which led to fortune.

In this new life Mansur had shown the same prudence as formerly, and had achieved the same



success. It was common report that his house was paved with gold and diamonds. True, the people did not love him; he was a foreigner in Arabia — an Egyptian — and then, too, he had the name of being the hardest of creditors. Yet the people of Jedda could not openly despise a man who measured his coin by the bushel. So whenever Mansur appeared in the bazaar, every one ran to him, striving with one another for the honor of holding his stirrup or of kissing his hand. The merchant received this homage with the modesty of one who knows the rights of wealth.

Only one thing did this favorite of fortune lack to complete his happiness. He had no children. When he passed the shop of some poorer tradesman and saw the father surrounded by his boys, — the hope and pride of the house, — he breathed a sigh of covetous regret, retired to the depths of his warehouse, forgot his pipe, and instead of counting his beads or reciting verses from the Koran, he slowly stroked his white beard, thinking with fear in his heart that old age was coming on and that he should leave no one of his own flesh and blood to carry on his business. His only heir was the pasha, who might get tired of waiting, and then what would prevent that worthy man from making away with a childless foreigner and laying hands upon this dearly bought treasure?

Such thoughts and fears long poisoned the life of the Egyptian, but when at last one of his wives, an Abyssinian woman, gave birth to a son, his joy was almost indescribable. That nothing might be wanting to complete his satisfaction, the child was born at the most favorable hour of the most fortunate month of the year. Upon the eighth day the merchant was permitted to see his long-desired offspring, and tremblingly approached the palm cradle lined with cotton, where under a gold-embroidered handkerchief of silk lay the heir of the Mansurs. Gently lifting the covering he saw an infant almost as black as its mother, but well built and already reaching out with its little hands to gather about it the cotton lining of its cradle. At this sight the merchant was dumb with admiration. Great tears rolled down his cheeks. Finally, making an effort to control himself, he took the little one in his arms and murmured: "O child, thou hast been born but eight days, yet to see thy strength and thy beauty any one would take thee to be a year old at least. Thy face shineth like the full moon. Come," he continued, turning to the mother, "what have you named him?"

"If God had sent us a daughter," replied the Abyssinian, "I would have chosen a name, but since it is a man child, to you belongs the honor. Only

beware of a too ambitious name, which might awaken envy and bring on the evil eye.¹

While Mansur was reflecting he heard a noise in the street. A Persian dervish was driving an ass laden with provisions, while a troop of boys followed, showering upon him insults and blows. Like one who neither feared nor sought martyrdom the dervish plodded on, returning meanwhile the abuse of his enemies. "Cursed be thou, Omar,²" cried he to the beast, "and cursed be all like thee."

"Ah," said Mansur, "this is a blessed suggestion. My son shall be called Omar. Such a name will ward off the evil eye and preserve him from all witchcraft."

As the merchant restored his infant to the cradle a Bedouin woman, carrying another young child of about the same age, entered the chamber. She was tall and comely, and her face was uncovered, as is the custom of the desert. Though poorly clad, she walked with so much stateliness and dignity that one would have thought her a sultana.

"Halima," said Mansur, "I am glad you have come. I have not forgotten that Yusuf, your husband, died in my service while defending my last

¹ *Evil eye*: a kind of sorcery proceeding from a glance of the eye.

² *Omar*: the Arabian name for an ass.

caravan. Now is the time to prove to you that I am not ungrateful. You know what I expect of you. If I cannot make my child a shereef,¹ nor give him the green turban,² I can at least have him reared like the son of a shereef, under a tent and among the noble Beni-Amer.³ Admitted to your family, brought up with your son, my dear Omar will learn a purer speech than mine, and will find among your kinsmen friends who later in life will protect him. On my part I will reward your devotion. Let the friendship of our children begin this very day, and henceforth let them sleep in the same cradle. To-morrow you shall take them and let them grow up together among your tribe. Omar shall be your son, as Abdallah shall be mine ; may Fortune smile on both."

"May God be their refuge from all evil," replied the woman bowing, as she looked fondly at the little one she carried, and at a signal from Mansur laid him by the side of Omar in the cradle.

¹ *Shereef*: a member of a princely Arabian family, claiming descent from Mohammed.

² A green turban was worn only by the shereefs.

³ *Beni-Amer* (or sons of Amer) : a Bedouin tribe of Eritrea.

CHAPTER II

THE HOROSCOPE

On the evening of the same day, as the moon shone into the chamber where the two children were peacefully sleeping side by side, the prudent Mansur entered, bringing after him a dervish with a matted beard, who looked very much like the persecuted donkey driver of the morning. It was one of those dishonest beggars who are always seeking in the stars the fate of others without finding fortune for themselves, and who, jeered at but always patronized, will continue to ply their trade as long as men continue to believe them. Halima was unwilling to leave the children with this questionable person, but Mansur ordered it, and she was forced to obey. Scarcely had she left the room when the Egyptian led the dervish to the cradle and asked him to take his son's horoscope.

After gazing attentively at the child, the astrologer mounted to the roof of the house and watched the stars for a long time ; then taking a piece of charcoal he drew a large square which he divided into many sections, placing in them the signs of the planets.

Finally, he declared that the heavens were propitious. If Mars and Venus were indifferent, Mercury at least appeared favorable. This was all that he could prophesy in return for the two sequins¹ which Mansur had given him.

The merchant led the soothsayer back into the chamber and, showing him two large doubloons,² asked of him, "Is there no way of learning more? Have the stars already yielded all their secrets?"

"Art is infinite," replied the dervish, seizing upon the money offered him. "I can yet tell you under the influence of what sign this child is destined to live."

Then drawing from his girdle a mysterious-looking tablet and a bronze pen, the astrologer wrote the names of the child and of the mother, placing the letters in a row. He counted the number of letters and, looking at Mansur with sparkling eyes, said: "Happy father! Your son is born under the sign of the Balance. If he lives, he may expect everything from Fortune."

"If he lives?" cried Mansur. "What do you read on your accursed tablet? Is there some danger which threatens his life?"

"Yes," replied the dervish, "a danger which I

¹ *Sequin*: an old gold coin, used in Italy and Turkey, worth about \$2.25.

² *Doubloon*: a Spanish gold coin worth about \$15.60.

cannot distinctly see. His best friend will be his worst enemy."

"What shall I do?" cried the Egyptian. "Shall this Bedouin child whom I have placed in the same cradle with my son become, one day, his murderer? If I thought so, I would —"

"Beware," replied the dervish. "If your son's life is bound up with this child's, you will kill them both at one blow. It is not likely that a Bedouin, born to live under a tent, will ever become the best friend of the richest merchant in Jedda. Besides, how can we escape fate? Can we change what has been traced by the pen of the angels? What is written, is written."

Having thus spoken, the astrologer bowed as if to take leave, but Mansur held fast to his robe.

"Have you something else to ask me?" said the dervish, looking attentively at the Egyptian.

"Yes," replied the merchant, "if I dared but speak it. A wise man like yourself who reads the stars may have pushed his investigations farther. It is said that there are those who by means of science have discovered the great call word of Allah, — that word which was revealed only to holy men and to the Prophet (Praise be unto him!), that word which can raise the dead and slay the living, that word which shakes the world, which compels the infernal

powers and even Satan himself to obey like a slave. Do you happen to know one of these gifted persons, and do you think he would refuse to oblige a man who has the reputation of being not ungrateful?"

"You are very prudent," replied the astrologer in a low voice, approaching Mansur, "and you are honest; yet words are but breath, and the fairest promises are like dreams which fade away with the morning."

In response, Mansur thrust his right arm into the dervish's long sleeve and placed one finger in his hand.

"A purse!"¹ cried the dervish in a disdainful tone. "That is but the price of a camel! Who would be so foolish as to call up Satan, at the risk of his life, for such a trifle?"

The Egyptian extended a second finger, meanwhile watching closely the dervish, whose face had assumed an expression of indifference. After a moment of silence Mansur drew a deep sigh and extended a third finger.

"Three purses," said the astrologer, "is the price of an infidel slave. The soul of a Mussulman cannot be bought at such a price. Let us part, Mansur, and forget the words which you have so indiscreetly spoken."

¹ *Purse*: a sum of money equal to about \$25.

"Do not leave me," cried the merchant, clutching the arm of the dervish; "five purses is a great sum and is all that I can offer."

"Give me the five purses, then," replied the dervish. "My friendship for you shall do the rest. I cannot look at you without feeling myself strangely drawn toward you. May this yielding not cost me too much!"

Mansur brought the money. The dervish weighed it carefully in his hand and put it into his girdle with the calmness of a great soul. Then taking the lamp, he walked three times around the cradle, murmuring strange words, waving the light in front of the infant, and bowing himself many times toward the four corners of the room, followed by Mansur, who was trembling with fear and anxiety.

After these ceremonies, which seemed to the merchant interminable, the dervish placed his lamp upon a bench by the wall, and drawing from his exhaustless girdle a little box, took from it a black powder which he threw upon the blazing wick. Immediately a dense smoke seemed to issue from the wall and to fill the chamber, and in the midst of this smoke Mansur fancied he saw the infernal figure and blazing eyes of an afreet.¹ The dervish seized his arm, and both men threw themselves upon the carpet, burying their faces in their hands.

¹ *Afreet*: one of the infernal genii.

"Speak," said the dervish in a trembling voice,—
"speak, and under pain of death raise not your head. You can have three wishes. Satan is here. Satan will hear you."

"I wish," murmured Mansur, "that my son throughout his life may be rich."

"So let it be," replied a strange voice which seemed to come from the back of the room, though Mansur had seen the apparition in front of him.

"I wish again," added Mansur, "that my son may always enjoy good health, for without health of what use is fortune?"

"So let it be," replied the voice.

There was a moment of silence; Mansur hesitated as to his third wish. "Shall I wish for genius?" he thought. "No; he is my son; he will be like me." Then the prophecy of the dervish all at once occurred to him. "Threatened by his best friend," thought he, "he can have but one means of safety; that is, to love no one and to think only of himself. Then, too, life is spoiled by worrying about other people; and those to whom we show favors are always ungrateful.

"I wish," said he at length, "that my son shall care only for himself."

"So let it be!" replied the voice, with a terrible cry,—a cry which filled the Egyptian with such

terror that he remained spellbound until the dervish pulled at the skirt of his robe and ordered him to rise. At the same moment a sheet of flame shot from the lamp, and the whole chamber seemed to be in a blaze. Mansur, terrified at his rashness, rushed to the door to make sure that he was still alive and that his house was yet standing.

While the dervish was resuming his cloak and sandals with the air of a man whom habit has hardened against fear, a woman entered and rushed to the cradle. It was Halima, who had remained just outside the chamber during the spell and whom the sudden exit of Mansur had doubly frightened. Her look was anxious, and her first care was to moisten her finger in water and pass it across the children's foreheads, repeating, meanwhile, a formula to guard them against witchcraft. The serenity of the dervish reassured her. She was ashamed of herself for having suspected ill of this pious person, who carried upon his face the calm of an honest life. Approaching him respectfully, she kissed the border of his robe.

"Holy man," said she, "my son is an orphan and I am a poor woman. I can offer you nothing except gratitude, but —"

"Yes, yes," cried the dervish. "I know what you are going to ask me. It is that your son may

be rich, is it not? For this, what need have you of my help? Make a merchant of him and let him steal like this old Mansur. Make a bashi-bazouk¹ of him and let him plunder his brethren. Make a dervish of him and let him flatter and lie. All the vices lead to fortune when greed — the worst of all — is added to them. This is the secret of life. Farewell."

"That is not what I want," cried the astonished Bedouin. "You do wrong to jeer at me so. My son will be an honest man, as his father was honest. What I ask is that he may be happy here on earth."

"Honest and happy!" said the dervish, with a strange laugh; "and you ask this of me! Good woman, it is the four-leaved clover that you want. Since Adam's time no one has seen it. Let your son seek for it, and when he shall have found it, you may be sure he will lack nothing."

"What is the four-leaved clover?" asked the mother, anxiously. But the dervish had disappeared, never to return. Whether man or demon, no one has since beheld him. Halima, greatly moved, bent over the cradle and looked upon her boy, who seemed to smile at her in his dreams. "Sleep well," she said, "and be strong in my love. I do not know

¹ *Bashi-bazouks*: an irregular body of soldiers in the Turkish army.

what this talisman may be of which the dervish speaks, but, son of my soul, we will seek for it together, and something tells me that you shall find it. Satan is artful and men are weak, but God rules the hearts of his people and doeth what he will."



CHAPTER III

EDUCATION

In confiding to this Bedouin woman the care of Omar, Mansur had given a new proof of his customary shrewdness. From the first day, she showed for her nursling all the devotion of a mother. She cared for him as tenderly as for her own offspring. If obliged to leave her tent for any purpose, the child whom she carried upon her shoulder or her hip was always "the little merchant," as Omar was called among the Beni-Amer. And yet what a difference there was between the two brothers! Tall, slender, supple, vigorous, Abdallah, with his clear eyes and brilliant complexion, would have been the pride of any parent, while the son of Mansur, dark-skinned, thick-necked, and fat, was only a low-bred Egyptian astray in the desert. What mattered it to the Bedouin woman? Had she not nourished them both? Who knows whether, like a true mother, she did not have a lingering weakness for the child that most needed her love.

Abdallah, as he grew up, showed all the nobility of his race. Any one seeing him with the Egyptian

- boy would have said that he already regarded himself as master of the tent, and was proud to perform the duties of hospitality. He became the guardian and protector of Omar, enjoying no greater pleasure than to amuse, serve, and defend him. In their plays and celebrations he always reserved the first place for "the little merchant." If a quarrel arose between Omar and any other youth, it was Abdallah who fought for him, strong, skillful, and enduring, like a true son of the desert.

Omar retired willingly behind Abdallah, as if he already realized what could be gained from an unselfish friend. Indolent, like the average townsman, he seldom left the tent. The Bedouin youth ran between the legs of the horses, played with the colts, and climbed upon the camels without making them kneel; the Egyptian, with legs crossed upon a mat, spent the greater part of the day asleep, and felt only disgust for the noisy exploits which were the joy of Abdallah. If he found himself among other children, it was to play the merchant with them, for the son of Mansur had remarkable skill in trading a date for a citron, a citron for an orange, an orange for a piece of coral or some other plaything. Yet he was not an ungrateful child. He loved his brother, after a fashion, and showered kisses upon him when Abdallah came home bringing bananas, pomegranates,

apricots, or some other fruit which had been given him • by the women of the neighborhood, who loved him for his grace and brightness. By wheedling, Omar always got what he wanted, but he was not better pleased with the success of his shrewdness than was his brother in allowing himself to be robbed by one he loved.

At the age of ten, thanks to Halima's care, the education of Abdallah was complete. He knew all that a child of the Beni-Amer ought to know. He could repeat the genealogy of his family and of his tribe. He knew the pedigree, the name, the surname, the hide, and the brand of all the horses. He could read in the stars the hour of the night, while the shadows told him the hour of the day. No one could make the camels kneel as quickly as he. No one could sing to them more sweetly those songs which shorten the journey and make them quicken their pace in spite of heat and weariness. Already he handled his gun and managed his sword and lance as if he had been in half a score of caravans. It was with tears of joy that Halima saw his youthful courage. She was proud and happy to feel that the child whom she had brought into the world would one day become the glory of his people and the delight of his tribe.

Halima was a good Mussulman; she knew that wisdom, strength, and comfort come only from God. The children were scarcely seven years old when



"No one could make the camels kneel as quickly as he"

she taught them to make the five prayers and the ablutions.¹ In the morning as soon as the first faint light shone in the east, at noonday when the heavens were ablaze, in the afternoon when the shadows lengthened, at evening when the sun touched the horizon, and finally at night when the last red flush of twilight had faded out of the sky, Abdallah and Omar spread out the prayer rug upon the ground, and, turning toward Mecca, repeated the holy words which summed up all their religion, "There is no god but God, and Mohammed is his prophet." When the prayer was finished, Halima would repeat to the children the precepts of Aisha, — precepts which she had made the rule of her life. "Sons of my soul," she would say to them, "hear what Aisha, the dearly beloved wife of the prophet, the peerless woman, the mother of the faithful, replied to a Mussulman who asked advice of her. Remember these holy maxims. They are the legacy of the Prophet himself, and a pearl of truth: 'Remember that there is one only God. Keep fast to the faith. Grow in knowledge. Bridle your tongue. Restrain your wrath. Forbear to do evil. Live with the good. Conceal your neighbor's faults. Give alms to the poor, and wait for your reward in heaven.'"

¹ *Ablution*: a ceremonial washing performed before prayer and on special occasions.

Thus were the two children reared, encircled with the same love, — a love so tender and so impartial that they never suspected they were not of the same blood. One day, however, an old man came into the tent, carrying a wooden tablet painted white, upon which were traced some beautiful characters in black. This old man was a sheik who enjoyed great renown in his tribe. It was said that he had once studied in Cairo in the splendid mosque of Al Azhar, that fountain of light which is the pride of the faithful. He was so learned that he could read from the Koran, and could copy with a reed the ninety-nine names of God, and the *Fatihah*.¹

To Abdallah's great astonishment the old man, after having spoken in an undertone to Halima and having received a purse from her, turned his attention entirely to Omar. He caressed the son of Mansur with a father's tenderness. He made him sit down on a mat; he put the tablet into his hands; and after having shown him how to balance the head and the body so as to aid the memory, he made him repeat the entire alphabet, chanting it, letter by letter. Omar took so lively an interest in the lesson that the first day he learned the numerical value of all the letters. The sheik, when departing, embraced

¹ *Fatihah*: the first chapter of the Koran, and the customary prayer of Mohammedans.

him again and promised him that if he continued as well as he had begun, he would some day be more learned than his teacher. Then he left the tent, without even looking at Abdallah.

At the end of his brother's first lesson — a lesson by which Abdallah would gladly have profited — the poor boy's heart was full. But he was spared a second trial. The next day he was sent to the fields to keep his mother's sheep. He was not alone, for he had been placed under the care of his mother's brother, an old shepherd, lame and with but one eye, yet a sensible man withal. Hafiz — for that was his uncle's name — was a brave soldier and a good Mussulman, who had seen and suffered much. He had been the companion of Yusuf, Abdallah's father, and was wounded while fighting at his side. Now he was the last support of an almost extinct family, and, alone and childless, he loved his nephew as a father loves his son.

He it was who had opposed the plan of making Abdallah a scholar. "Do you want to know more than the Prophet — whom God bless and protect?" said he to the young Bedouin. "What would you read? The Koran? Is it upon a vile bit of paper that the holy word should be written, or upon the heart? As to other books, of what use are they? Is not everything in the Koran? At the age of

discretion God will give you wisdom and knowledge as he gave them to the son of Jacob. It is thus that he rewards the faithful. He himself hath said it."

These words fired Abdallah's heart. Every day when the noontide heat kept them within the tent, Hafiz recited a few verses of the holy book, and Abdallah repeated them in turn. So, little by little, the boy learned the entire Koran. His mind seemed like the sand of the desert which drinks in every drop of rain. Day and night he repeated to himself the wonderful precepts in which eloquence and wisdom are strung together like the pearls of a necklace. Whenever a good Mussulman wished to give a feast to his comrades, or to pay honors at the tomb of a friend, it was always the lame shepherd and his pupil whom they chose to recite the Koran. Seated upon the ground in a circle around teacher and scholar, the Beni-Amer drank in the blessed words. "God is great," they cried, "and Gabriel, when he put into the heart of the Prophet the divine revelation, was not more beautiful than is this young man."

Beautiful indeed was this child of the desert, clothed in his long blue robe, gathered up at the waist by a thong of leather. His thick brown curls shaded his face and hung about his neck. His eyes

shone with a softer light than that of the planets which tremble in the sky, as, holding in his hand a shining lance, he walked quietly along, with the grace of a child and the dignity of a man, speaking only when necessary and never laughing. When he returned from the pasture carrying a young lamb in the folds of his robe, with the sheep following after him, bleating and rubbing their heads against his hand, the other shepherds stopped to see him pass. He seemed like Joseph worshiped by the eleven stars. And at evening, at the public well, when with a strength beyond his years he lifted the great stone and watered the flocks, the women, forgetting to fill their water jars, cried out, "He is as handsome as his father." And the men replied, "He will also be as brave."

CHAPTER IV

A DISCOVERY

Years had passed since the day when Halima had taken under her tent the heir of the wealthy Mansur. Omar was fifteen years of age, and did not yet know the secret of his birth. More than once the rude jests of his comrades had made him feel that he was not one of the Beni-Amer and that the blood which flowed in his veins was not as pure as that of Abdallah ; but although he was called "the little merchant," no one in the tribe knew his parentage. He believed that he was an orphan, reared by the generosity of Halima, and destined to live in the desert.

One evening, as the two brothers returned from the field, they were surprised to see at the door of the tent several camels with rich trappings. Near them stood a mule covered with a beautiful rug and held by a negro clothed in white.

"Where did this mule come from?" asked Omar ;
"and who brought it?"

"It is your father's mule," replied the slave, who from the boy's features easily recognized him as the

son of Mansur. "We have come from Jedda to seek you."

"And who is my father?" asked Omar, greatly excited.

"Your father," replied the negro, "is the wealthy Mansur, the syndic¹ of the merchants of Jedda, the Sultan of the Egyptian residents. Not a bale of goods, great or small, enters the harbor or goes out through one of the city gates, which is not first offered to him and which he cannot dispose of as he will. At Yambo, at Suez, at Khartum, at Cairo, your father has slaves who look after his warehouses; and his fortune is so great that his servants do not consult him about any matter involving less than a hundred thousand piasters."²

"O my father, where are you?" cried the youth, dashing into the tent. "Thanks be to Allah, who has given me a father so worthy of my love!" So saying, he threw himself into the arms of Mansur with a fervor which delighted the old merchant and made Halima sigh.

On the next day they set out for Jedda, to the great grief of the Bedouin woman, who could not bear to part from the child that she had loved so

¹ *Syndic*: an official representative and councilor.

² A hundred thousand Turkish or Egyptian piasters is equal to \$4500.

long. "Farewell, my son, — and dearer than son," she said, covering him with tears and caresses. Omar was more self-possessed than she, and left her with the joy of a captive who finds at once freedom and fortune. Abdallah, at Mansur's invitation, accompanied his brother to the city. To show the Bedouin youth how far the power of wealth in a city like Jedda raises a merchant above the herdsmen of the desert, and to make him feel that his mother and himself ought to consider themselves superlatively happy in having loved and served Omar for fifteen years, was Mansur's way of paying his debt of gratitude.

Arrived at Jedda, Omar broke forth into transports of joy. He was like an exile returning to his native land. Everything charmed him, the straight streets with their great stone houses, the harbor where were unloaded hogsheads of sugar, sacks of coffee, and bales of cotton, the motley throng which wended its way toward the bazaar: Turks, Syrians, Greeks, Arabs, Persians, Hindus, negroes of every shade, Jews, pilgrims, dervishes, beggars, rich merchants mounted upon splendidly harnessed mules, donkey drivers conducting women wrapped in great black cloaks, with only the eyes visible, looking like disembodied spirits, camel drivers, dark-browed and threatening, shouting fiercely to the crowd to make

way, Arnauts¹ swaggering with bold and threatening air, proud of their Damascus blades and their flowing garments, peaceful smokers sitting cross-legged at the doors of the cafés, — all this was to Omar a scene more beautiful than his fondest dreams had ever pictured. Dwelling in such a place as this, what might he not buy and sell? Had he not been told by his father, on the journey, the cost of everything? Did he not already know the price that was set upon the honesty of a *cadi*,² the scruples of a *sheik*,³ and even the conscience of a *pasha*?⁴

At the end of a dark, narrow street they found the house of Mansur. It was a building of no distinction. From the street could be seen only a dingy room, with some rush mats thrown down along the whitewashed walls. No other decoration was visible. But on the second story, carefully concealed, and guarded with blinds that defied alike the sun and the curiosity of the passer-by, were magnificent rooms furnished with Turkish rugs and encircled by divans of velvet embroidered with silver. The travelers were hardly seated when a richly carved table

¹ *Arnaut*: an Albanian; especially one serving as a soldier in the Turkish army.

² *Cadi*: the magistrate of a town.

³ *Sheik*: an Arab chief; the head of a family, tribe, or clan.

⁴ *Pasha*: an honorary title given to officers of high rank, as governors, military commanders, etc.

was placed before them, upon which were set forth plates loaded with jellied fruits. While one slave poured rose water over Abdallah's brown hands and gave him a napkin fringed with gold, another burned incense before old Mansur, who fanned the fragrant smoke into his beard and clothing. Then coffee was served in little china cups, set in gold filigree work. After coffee, came delicious sherbets made with crushed violets and pomegranate juice. Finally, three little negroes, clothed in scarlet and covered with necklaces and bracelets, lighted long jasmine pipes and presented one to each of the three travelers, who seated themselves upon the floor, silent and absorbed.

They smoked a long time without speaking. Mansur was happy in the joy which he saw in his son and in the admiration which he thought he saw in Abdallah. The face of the Bedouin lad was perfectly impassive. In the midst of all this magnificence he was as grave and calm as when among his flocks.

"Well, my son," said Mansur, at length, turning to Abdallah, "are you pleased with your journey?"

"Father," replied the young man, "I thank you for your kindness. Your heart is even richer than your treasure."

"Yes, yes," said the merchant, "but I want to know what you think of Jedda. Should you like to remain here with us?"

"No, sire. Here the air is close, the water is impure. Then there are those dull dervishes who put on airs and show their greed to every one; and the soldiers whom one does not dare to punish with a blow of the sword; and these slaves who rob us of the use of our hands and spy out our wishes so that they may minister to them. No! the desert for me!"

"Your words are gold, my son," said Mansur, stroking his long beard with his hand. "A Wahabite¹ could not be more severe. When I was a child and recited my lessons at my nurse's knee I thought as you do. Remain with us a little while. Make a merchant of yourself. When you shall see how fortune gives to the meanest of men youth, virtue and authority, how the mighty men of the day—the women, too, and even the saints—bow down before the gold which you despise, you will change your mind and will come to love the odors of the city. It is beautiful to live like the lark, free in space, but sooner or later the lark is snared. The duro² is the king of the world, and the time will come when the bravest and the most skillful alike are but servants of the richest."

¹ *Wahabite*: a member of an Arabian sect distinguished by its strict interpretation of the Koran.

² *Duro*: a Spanish coin worth about a dollar.

"I well know," replied Abdallah, proudly, "that nothing can satisfy the greed of the greedy. Nothing but the dust of the tomb can take away his appetite. But in the desert, at least, an ounce of honor is worth more than a hundredweight of gold. With the help of Allah I will live like my fathers. He who wants nothing is always free. Farewell, then, Mansur; farewell, my brother."

"Farewell, my good Abdallah," returned Omar. "Each of us follows his fate. 'What is written, is written.' You were born to live among the tents and I to be a merchant. Farewell. I shall not forget the friendship of my boyhood. Be sure that if ever I need a strong arm, it is to you that I shall go."

"Thank you, brother," cried the Bedouin; and throwing his arms about Omar, he held him tenderly for a moment, without keeping back or hiding the tears.

Omar accepted these tokens of affection calmly; and when Abdallah with bowed head and sorrowful mien, looking back toward the house more than once as he departed, had at last passed out of hearing, the Egyptian youth turned to his father. "Now," said he, "what have you been thinking of to leave me so long with this Bedouin? If you had died and I had presented myself before the magistrate to claim my inheritance, the old men of the city would

have said, 'We have known Mansur all our lives, but have never heard of his having either son or daughter,' and then who but the pasha would have been your heir? Take me to the bazaar; introduce me to your friends, the merchants; above all, let me be your partner and open a warehouse. I long to handle money. I have already, while living among the tents, learned how to figure, and how to manage men so as to gain much and risk little. You will not have to blush for your son."

"My child," cried Mansur, raising his trembling hands, "wisdom speaks through your mouth; but the day is now too far spent for us to go out, and, besides, you are not suitably clothed. To-morrow we will go to the bazaar; to-morrow all Jedda shall know my happiness and my pride."

All night long Omar dreamed of gold and silver; all night Mansur tossed upon his bed, unable to close his eyes. The merchant saw himself renewed in a son more shrewd, more cunning, more unfeeling, and more avaricious than himself. "Ah," he cried, "I am the happiest of fathers. The dervish made no mistake. If my son escapes the danger which threatens him, who can say when the wealth of my house will end?"

CHAPTER V

A SECOND SOLOMON

The next morning at daybreak Mansur conducted his son to the bath and clothed him in a manner befitting his new position. A robe of striped silk, in bright colors, gathered at the waist with a cashmere girdle, a full undercoat of the finest and softest material, a white embroidered skullcap about which was wound a muslin turban, — such was the elegant costume furnished Omar by the best tailor in Jedda. In this dress the features of the Egyptian youth seemed harder and his skin darker than ever. The tailor, however, did not think so. He could not say enough in praise of Omar's grace and beauty ; and he pitied the city ladies who could look with indifference upon this face, more beautiful, he insisted, than the full moon. When no trace remained of the former Bedouin, breakfast was served and ices brought ; then, after some advice from old Mansur, Omar got upon a mule and, modestly following his father, started for the bazaar.

Upon their arrival the old Egyptian took his son into a narrow shop which looked like all the others

in the market place, but which was full of precious goods. Shawls from India, satins and brocades from China, carpets from Bassora, scimitars in their carved silver scabbards, pipes mounted with amber and adorned with rubies, rosaries of black coral, necklaces of sequins and of pearls, — everything that could attract women, everything that could win men, was to be found in this warehouse. Before the shop was a stone bench. Mansur, having placed a cushion upon it, seated himself, crossed his legs, and lighted his pipe. Omar took a rosary and, without looking at the crowd, began to recite his prayers. He was a child in years, but he had the cunning of an old man.

As soon as the merchants saw their syndic they arose and came to him in a body to repeat the Fati-hah and to wish him a good morning. Every one looked at the newcomer with surprise, and each asked his neighbor, in an undertone, who the boy might be. Was it some kinsman of the Egyptian or only a young slave richly dressed in order to draw customers? Mansur called the sheik and, pointing to Omar, said in a loud voice, "This is my son, my partner, and my successor."

"Your son!" cried the sheik. "Who ever imagined that the wealthy Mansur had an heir?"

"I wished to ward off the evil eye," replied the old man. "That is why I had my child brought up



"This is my son, my partner, and my successor"

far away from me and in secret. I did not intend to present him to you until he could stroke his beard, but I am growing old and impatient. So, with your permission, I will establish him to-day in the bazaar to learn of you the art of buying and selling."

"Mansur is always wise," replied the merchants, as each strove to be first in congratulating the happy father. "May Allah preserve both tree and branch," they cried.

In the midst of these congratulations, which tickled the pride of the Egyptian, the sheik remarked: "It is a custom among us, when a son or a daughter is born, for the father, even though he be poor, to invite his brethren to rejoice with him. Have you forgotten us?"

"Honor me with your presence this evening," replied the old man. "You shall be welcome."

An hour later a messenger, carrying a huge bouquet, made the circuit of the bazaar, offering a flower to each merchant.

"Recite the Fatihah for the Prophet," said he to each; and when the Fatihah had been repeated, he added, "Mansur begs you to come to his house and have coffee with him this evening."

"Mansur is the soul of generosity," replied the guest. "With the blessing of Allah we will pay our respects to him this evening."

At the appointed hour the Egyptian and his son received the merchants in a little garden, where a splendid feast was spread. Lamb stuffed with almonds and pistachios, rice with crocus, cream sauces, rose jelly, pastry of every sort, — nothing was spared to honor the distinguished guests. For the first time in his life Mansur wished that the poor should share his joy; so he had the leavings of the feast distributed among them at the door, with a few small silver pieces. This was enough to fill the street with shouts and blessings and to make all Jedda resound with the fame of the generous Omar and the rich Mansur.

When coffee had been served and the pipes lighted, the sheik took Omar by the hand. "Here is our friend's son," said he, "who wishes to be admitted to our honorable company. I ask each of you to recite the Fatihah for the Prophet."

While the prayer was being three times repeated, the sheik tied a shawl about Omar, making a knot after each Fatihah. This done, the young man kissed the sheik's hand and the hand of each of the company, beginning with the eldest. His eyes shone with delight. He was a merchant of Jedda. He was rich. The world was opening before him.

The rest of the evening was spent in conversation, all of which was upon the subject of trade. Omar

did not open his mouth. He sat near the old men, and the old men did not weary of talking to a youth who listened with such attention and respect. They told him how a good salesman ought always to ask four times the value of the thing which he is selling, and never to lose his coolness, for this is the secret of trade. Making a trade, they said, is like catching a fish. It is necessary to draw the customer gently to you and to give him line, until, dazzled and weary, he is unable to defend himself. To toy with a rosary, to offer coffee or a pipe, to talk of other matters than the one in hand, to preserve a careless mien and yet kindle desire in the heart of the buyer, is a difficult accomplishment, which is not learned in a single day. "But," they added, patting Omar affectionately, "you are in a good school, my son. Neither Jew nor Armenian can teach the shrewd Mansur anything."

"Is business nothing more than this?" thought the young man. "Then I have no need of these people. To think only and always of one's self, to increase the passions or weaknesses of fools in order to draw from them the wealth they hoard, — I have known all that from my birth. I did nothing else than that in the desert. My masters will be shrewd indeed if I do not myself give them a lesson before six months have passed."

A few days later Mansur appeared before the cadi in connection with a lawsuit. The outcome did not greatly disturb him. A private talk with the cadi had given him some confidence in the justice of his cause. Mansur asked his son to go with him, in order to accustom him early to dealing with the law. In the court of the mosque sat the cadi, a fat, good-looking man who never took the trouble to think and rarely to speak, — a habit that, taken in connection with his huge turban and his air of profound gravity, gave him a great reputation for justice and wisdom. The audience was large. All the leading merchants, seated on rugs upon the ground, formed a semicircle before the magistrate. Mansur took his place at a little distance from the sheik. Between the two sat Omar, very curious to see how the law was obeyed, and how it was trifled with in case of need.

The first case was that of an effeminate young banian,¹ dressed in flowing robes and with a skin as yellow as an orange. He had just come from India, and complained of having been cheated by one of Mansur's competitors.

"At Delhi, among my father's possessions," said the young man, "I found, after his death, a casket of

¹ *Banian*: one of a caste of Hindu merchants, who eat no meat.

diamonds. With these I set out for Egypt, expecting to sell them and upon the proceeds to live thereafter in ease and comfort. Having been obliged to stop at Jedda on account of bad weather, I remained here some time, enjoying myself, until I was out of money. I was then told that if I wished to dispose of my diamonds, I could here find a ready market for them. I went to the bazaar and inquired for a dealer in precious stones. I was told that the richest was Mansur, but that the most reliable was Ali, the jeweler. I went to the latter. When he had learned the object of my visit, he welcomed me as if I were his son. He would not talk business in the bazaar. He took me home with him. For several days he treated me most generously. He gained my confidence by every sort of attention. He advanced me all the money that I needed. At last, one day after dinner, when I was not quite sober, he asked me to bring the casket. He examined each of the diamonds which it contained ; then, in a tone of pity, he said : ' My son, in Arabia and in Egypt these stones are of little value. The rocks of the desert furnish thousands of them. My coffers are full.'

"To prove the truth of this assertion he opened a box, took out a diamond larger than any of mine, and presented it to the slave who accompanied me.

" 'What will become of me ?' I cried. 'I have no

other possessions. I thought myself rich, but I am poor, a stranger, and far from my family and my country.'

" 'My child,' answered the jeweler, 'when I first saw you I conceived a friendly feeling for you. Does a Mussulman forsake his friends in trouble? Never. Leave me this casket, and for your sake I will give a price that no one else would think of offering. Choose anything you wish in Jedda, — gold, silver, coral, — and in two hours I promise to give you pound for pound of it in exchange for these Indian stones of yours.'

" On returning home, night brought with it time for reflection. I made inquiries and soon learned that Ali had deceived me. What he had given to the slave was only a piece of crystal. Diamonds are rarer in Jedda than in India, and they are worth ten times their weight in gold. I demanded back my casket. Ali refused to give it to me. Now, venerable judge, my only hope is in your justice. Take up the cause of a stranger and punish the wretch who has ruined me."

It was Ali's turn to speak. "Illustrious servant of the Most High," said he to the *cadi*, "there is only one true statement in the story that this young man has told you; that is, that we have made a bargain, and that I am ready to abide by it. All the

rest is his own invention. Why mention the present that I gave the slave? That has nothing to do with the affair. Could a sensible man see in that anything else than a pleasantry? Did I force this stranger to leave his casket with me? Is it my fault that his need made him accept my conditions? Why does he accuse me of dishonesty? Have I broken my word, and has he kept his?"

"Young man," said the *cadi* to the *banian*, "have you witnesses who will swear that Ali deceived you in regard to the value of your goods? If not, I shall put the accused under oath. Thus the law decrees."

The Koran was brought. Ali placed his right hand upon the holy book, and three times protested his innocence.

"Wretch," said the *banian*, "your feet shall go down to destruction. You have lost your soul."

"That may be," said a merchant to Omar, in a whisper, "but he has gained a great fortune. This Ali is a shrewd fellow."

"He is no fool," added Mansur. "The game was well played."

Omar only smiled, and, while Ali was congratulating himself upon the success of his scheme, went over to the stranger, who was weeping bitterly. "Should you like to have me gain your case for you?" he asked.

"Yes," cried the banian ; "put this scoundrel to rout, and ask of me what you will. But you are only a lad. You can accomplish nothing."

"I ask you only to have confidence in me," replied Omar. "Accept Ali's proposition, let me choose for you, and have no fear."

"What can I fear when everything is lost?" replied the stranger ; and he bowed his head as one who has lost all hope. Yet he turned to the cadi and, making a respectful obeisance, said :

"O my lord and master, thy servant implores one last favor of thy mercy. Let the agreement be fulfilled, since the law demands it, but let this young man choose in my stead what Ali shall give me in payment."

There was a deep silence. Omar arose and, having bowed to the cadi, turned to the jeweler. "Ali," said he, "doubtless you have brought the casket and can tell us the weight of it."

"Certainly," said the jeweler. "It weighs twenty pounds. I say, again, choose what you will, and if the thing is to be found in Jedda, you shall have it within two hours, or the bargain is off. Every one knows that my word is sacred and that I never break it."

"What we want," said Omar, raising his voice, "is a quantity of ant's wings. You have two hours

in which to get for us the twenty pounds which you have promised."

"That is ridiculous," cried the jeweler. "That is impossible. It would take ten persons at least six months to satisfy this absurd demand. It is playing with justice to consider these childish caprices."

"Are there any winged ants in Jedda?" asked the cadi.

"Surely," replied the merchants, laughing; "they are our Egyptian plague. Our houses are full of them. It would be a great service to rid us of them."

"Then," said the cadi, "Ali must keep his promise or give back the casket. This young man was mad to sell his diamonds pound for pound; he is also mad to exact such a payment. So much the better for Ali the first time; so much the worse for him the second time. Justice has not two weights and two measures. Every bargain is sacred in the eyes of the law. Either furnish twenty pounds of ant's wings or give back the casket to the banian."

"Wisely decided," cried the spectators, pleased at the justice of the judgment.

The banian, almost beside himself with joy, embraced Omar, calling him his defender and his master. Nor was this enough. Taking from the casket three of the finest diamonds, as large as nightingale's eggs, he handed them to Omar, who straightway put

them into his girdle, kissed the banian's hand respectfully, and returned to his seat beside his father, unmoved by the admiring gaze of the crowd.

"Well done, my son," said Mansur, "but Ali is a novice. If he had not neglected the *cadi*, he would have gained his case. Now it is my turn. Profit by the lesson that I shall give you." Then, turning to the banian, who was making off with his diamonds, he cried: "Stop a moment, young man. We, too, have an account to settle. I beg the illustrious *cadi* to keep possession of this casket a little longer. Perhaps there are some here who have more right to it than this stranger or than the thrifty Ali."

There was a ripple of excitement among the bystanders, and all listened to hear who this new claimant might be.

"Day before yesterday," said Mansur, "a veiled lady came to my shop in the bazaar and asked to see some necklaces. Nothing that I showed her seemed to be satisfactory. Finally, just before leaving, she noticed a sealed box in a corner and asked me to open it. This box contained a topaz necklace which was no longer at my disposal, having been sold to the pasha of Egypt. I told the lady this; but she insisted that I should at least show her the gift destined for a sultana. A woman's wish is a thing not easily thwarted. I was weak enough to yield.

The strange lady looked at the necklace, tried it on, and then said that she must have it at any price. Upon my refusal to sell it, she went out, heaping upon me threats and maledictions. An hour later this young man entered my shop and told me that his life and the life of this lady depended upon the possession of the necklace. He besought me, he kissed my hand, he wept. 'Father,' said he, 'ask of me what you will, but I must have these jewels or die.'

"I have a weakness for young men; and though I realized how dangerous it was to disappoint my master, the pasha, I could not resist his prayers. 'Take the topazes,' I said, 'and agree to give me whatever I ask in exchange.' 'My head, if you wish,' he replied, 'for you have saved my life,' and with this he carried off the necklace. We had no witnesses," added Mansur, turning to the banian, "but was it not as I have said?"

"Yes," replied the young man. "Pardon me for not having paid the debt sooner. You know the reason. But now, thanks to your son, I have recovered my fortune. Ask of me what you wish."

"What I wish," said Mansur, bowing to the cadi, who was fixedly gazing at a palm tree in the distance, "is this casket with all that it contains. This is not too much for a man who has risked his life by disobeying his pasha. Illustrious judge, your Excellency

has said that every agreement is sacred in the eyes of the law. I have been promised anything that pleases me. Now, I insist, the only thing that pleases me is these diamonds."

The cadi lifted his head and looked about the assembly as if to find an answer in the faces of the people. Then he began to stroke his beard, and relapsed into meditation.

"Ali is hit," said the sheik to Omar, with a laugh. "A more cunning fox has not been born than the worthy Mansur."

"I am lost," cried the banian. "Omar, have you saved me only to throw me into a deeper gulf of despair? Ask your father to spare me, and I shall a second time owe you my life."

"My son," said Mansur in a low tone, turning to Omar, "you are unquestionably shrewd, but this will show you that your father knows a little more than you. The cadi is going to pronounce judgment. See, then, whether you can change his answer."

"This is only play," said Omar, shrugging his shoulders; "but since you wish it, my father, you shall lose your case."

Thereupon he arose, and taking a piaster out of his girdle, he put it into the banian's hand and led him before the judge. "Illustrious cadi," said he, "this young man is ready to pay for the necklace. This is

what he offers Mansur. It is a piaster. In itself the coin is of little value,¹ but observe that it is stamped with the image of the Sultan, our glorious master. May all who disobey his Highness be utterly destroyed and brought to naught ! It is this precious image that we offer you," and Omar turned to Mansur as he spoke. " If it pleases you, you are paid. If you dare to say that it displeases you, that is an insult to our Lord Protector. That is an offense punishable by death ; and surely our worthy cadi, who is and has always been a faithful servant of the Sultan, will not be your accomplice in the crime."

When Omar had finished speaking, all eyes were fixed upon the cadi, who, more imperturbable than before, slowly stroked his beard and waited for Mansur to come to his relief. Mansur was disturbed. The cadi's silence and the suspense of the crowd alarmed him. He turned an appealing glance toward his son.

" My father," said Omar, " allow this young man to thank you for the lesson of prudence which you have taught him by thus frightening him a little. He understands that it was you who sent me to his aid, and that all this is a joke. No one is deceived by seeing a son apparently at odds with his father, and no one ever doubted Mansur's wisdom or generosity."

¹ The Turkish piaster is worth about four cents.

"No one," interrupted the cadi, starting like a man awakened from a dream, "and I, least of all. This is why I have allowed you to speak, my young Solomon. I wished to honor, in your person, your father's wisdom. But another time be careful how you use the name of the Sultan. It is not safe to play with the lion's claws. As to this affair, it is settled. The necklace is worth a hundred thousand piasters, is it not, Mansur? Then this young scape-grace shall give you a hundred thousand piasters and we shall all be satisfied."

In spite of his modesty Omar could not escape the gratitude of the banian nor the congratulations of the merchants. The stranger forced more diamonds into his hands. He seized the bridle of the mule which Omar rode, and went with him to the door of his house, calling him the wisest and most generous of men. The merchants, for their part, all hastened to congratulate Mansur; and to this day in Jedda the story is told of the celebrated case in which this youth so aptly called by the cadi a second Solomon showed forth his wisdom.

When they had reached home Mansur burst forth: "I do not understand you, my son. I had a fortune in my hands and you snatched it from me. Is this your idea of business? Is this the way you respect your father?"

"Have patience, father," replied Omar, coolly. "To-day I have made myself a name for good judgment and honesty. It is a reputation that will last. It is a first impression that will never be effaced. Reputation is a jewel which nothing else can replace. It is capital a thousand times more valuable than your diamonds. Every one distrusts the wily Mansur ; but every one will have confidence, as this stranger has had, in the honesty and integrity of Omar. The bait is thrown. Now let the fishes come."

Mansur stood like one dumb. He had wished for a son who should be worthy of him, but he began to fear that Eblis had more than granted his prayer. Such foresight at so tender an age ought to have delighted a man whose whole life had been one of calculation, but, it must be confessed, the old man's heart was chilled by such an exhibition of precocious shrewdness, and he stood appalled before this fifteen-year-old schemer.

CHAPTER VI

A SCHEMER'S REWARD

During the remainder of Mansur's life nothing seemed lacking to complete his happiness. For about five years he gave himself up to the enjoyment of his son's growing power and success. He saw all his business pass into Omar's hands. The wealth of his house became enormous, and, as is often the case, the esteem with which he was regarded increased with his increasing fortune. How could Omar help amassing wealth? He had everything in his favor, — a fortune to start with, few desires, and no scruples. No one had ever united so fully the elements that make a successful money-getter, — love of gold and contempt for the rights of other men. Mansur could therefore die in peace. He had been granted a long life; his last years had been free from pain; his dreams had been realized; he was leaving behind him an heir who would preserve and increase the fortune which he had worked so hard to accumulate. Yet it is said that he died in agony of spirit, crying out that no one loved him, cursing his folly, and shuddering at the sight of

his treasures, as if already his gold, heated in the infernal fires, was burning his heart and his head.

Omar heard of his father's death with perfect resignation. Business had kept him from being often at the bedside ; business was now his consolation. He bore up well under the loss, and the sight of a piaster dried his tears and assuaged his grief.

Left in sole possession of so great an inheritance, the son of Mansur set no bounds to his desires. Nothing escaped his scheming. It seemed as if from within his little house in Jedda, like a spider in its web, he drew to himself all the riches of the world : rice and sugar from India ; gums and coffee from Yemen ; ivory, gold dust, and slaves from Abyssinia ; corn from Egypt ; fabrics from Syria ; ships and caravans, — all came at Omar's bidding. Yet no one ever accepted good fortune with more modesty. To see him walking along the street dressed in his dingy robe and scanty turban, casting down his eyes and fingering his wooden beads, one would not think him worth a thousand piasters. Nothing in his conversation betrayed the rich man. He was gracious to his inferiors, free and easy with his equals, servile to those from whom he had anything to gain, and polite to all who had the power to injure him. He insisted that people were mistaken in considering him wealthy. All this merchandise did not belong to him ; it was

consigned by foreign correspondents who had confidence in him, and this confidence must have been very trying to him, for he was always complaining that he had lost money. If he bought a particularly valuable slave, or an unusually expensive perfume, or a very choice grade of tobacco, or a most remarkable fabric, it was always purchased for some pasha or some foreign dealer. It was whispered that these treasures never went farther than the Egyptian's house (for who can stop the gossip of the people?); but nothing certain was known about it. Omar had no friends. He transacted all his business in the market place and received no visitors. Whether he was rich or poor, broad-minded or narrow, humble or hypocritical, no mortal knew with absolute certainty.

But wealth has its drawbacks. Like smoke, it cannot long be hidden; and in spite of his humility, Omar, before long, received an invitation from the grand shereef of Mecca to come to Taif to render an important service, which no one else, it was said, could perform. The merchant was less impressed with the honor that had been shown him than he was alarmed at the service which might be demanded. "A rich man," he said, "has two kinds of enemies, the poor and the great. The first are like ants; they empty his house grain by grain. The second are like lions; with one blow of the paw they strike him

down. But with caution and cunning, one can shake off the lion more easily than the ant. Let us see what the shereef wants. If he is planning to deceive me, I will not be his dupe ; but if he is willing to pay me money, he shall have the worth of it."

It was with this sort of respect for the Commander of the Faithful that Omar set out for Taif. The sight of the desert soon changed the current of his thoughts. The tents and the clusters of palm trees scattered over the sands reminded him of his childhood, and, for the first time in years, he thought of his brother Abdallah. "Who knows," he said to himself, "whether I may not sometime need him?"

CHAPTER VII

THE CLOVER

While the son of Mansur gave himself up to covetousness, as if there were nothing beyond this life, Abdallah grew in goodness, wisdom, and virtue. He followed his father's calling and conducted caravans from Yambo and Medina to Mecca. As eager as the colt that flings his mane to the wind, and as cautious as a veteran, he had gained the confidence of the leading merchants, and, in spite of his youth, was recommended above all others to pilgrims who in the holy month¹ came from all quarters of the world to walk seven times around the holy Kaaba,² to camp on Mount Arafat,³ and to offer sacrifices in the valley of Mina.⁴ These journeys were often

¹ *Holy month*: the twelfth month of the Mohammedan year, called Dhul Hijjah. It is set apart for the pilgrimage to Mecca.

² *Kaaba*: the shrine of the Mohammedans at Mecca, inclosing the sacred "Black Stone" which fell from heaven—probably a meteorite.

³ *Arafat*, or Jebel al-Rahmah, is a hill near Mecca, said to have been the place where Adam found Eve after their expulsion from Paradise.

⁴ *Mina*: a valley below Mount Arafat.

perilous. More than once the Bedouin had risked his life to protect the travelers under his charge, and had fought so well that all along his route he began to be feared and respected. Old Hafiz never left his pupil's side ; crippled though he was, he always found an opportunity to make himself useful. Wherever there are men, there are always to be found strong arms and valiant hearts, but not always a faithful friend and a wise counselor.

This sort of life, with its mingling of excitement and repose, of danger and peace, was delightful to Abdallah. To live a brave man and to die fighting, as his father died, was his one ambition. Yet there was a cloud over the serenity of his soul. Halima had told him of the dervish's words, and this child of the desert longed to find the mysterious leaf which should bring to its possessor perfect happiness.

Hafiz, to whom Abdallah first opened his heart, saw in the idea only a temptation of the Evil One. "Why trouble yourself?" he said to the young man. "In the Koran God tells us how we can please him. He has but one law. Let us do as he bids, and not be anxious about anything else. It is not wise to disturb ourselves with vain questionings."

These words did not quench Abdallah's curiosity. Hafiz had told him so many marvelous tales — and he believed them all — that he could not see why

the story of this talisman might not also be true, and why one of the faithful might not discover it. "We people of the desert are unlearned," thought he. "I will ask one of the pilgrims. God has scattered his truth throughout all the world. Who knows whether some wise man of the East or of the West may not know the secret which I long to discover? The dervish did not answer my mother thoughtlessly, and with God's help I will find the right way."

Some months after this Abdallah conducted to Mecca a caravan of pilgrims from Egypt. At the head of the party was a physician, who talked and laughed a great deal and was skeptical about everything, — a European, it was said, who had abjured his faith to enter the service of the pasha. Abdallah resolved to question him, and as they passed a bit of greensward in an oasis, he plucked a clover leaf which he handed to the stranger. "Is this plant known in your country?" he asked.

"Certainly," replied the physician. "It is what you call *barseem*. We call it *trifolium*, or clover. It is the Alexandrian trefoil, family *leguminosae*, calyx tubular, corolla persistent, leaves divided into three segments or folioles — sometimes into four or even five, but that is an exception, or, as we say, a freak."

"In your country is there no trefoil which always has four leaves?"

"No, my young savant; neither in my country nor in any other. Why do you ask?"

When he had heard Abdallah's story, he burst out laughing. "My boy," he said, "that dervish was making sport of your mother. She asked for an impossible thing. It is the impossible that he has promised her."

"Why should not God make a trefoil with four leaves if he wished?" asked Abdallah, hurt by the stranger's sneer.

"Why, young man? Because at a certain time the earth was made to bring forth all forms of vegetable life by virtue of a germinative force which was exhausted in the act of production. In our time, as well as in King Solomon's, there is nothing new under the sun."

"And if God wished to work a miracle," interrupted Hafiz, approaching the travelers, "is his power exhausted? He who, in the space of two days, made out of smoke the seven heavens and the seven worlds and set them five hundred days' journey from each other, he who ordered that the night should enfold the day, he who has scattered life abroad everywhere, could he not add a new bit of green life to the millions of plants which he has made for the food and for the pleasure of man?"

"Surely," said the physician in a sarcastic tone.

"I am too good a Mussulman to pretend to contradict you." Whereupon he began to fill his pipe, whistling a foreign air meanwhile.

"Cursed be unbelievers!" cried the old cripple. "Come, my son, leave this wicked man whose breath carries contagion. It is to punish us that God has given to these Europeans the knowledge which makes them powerful, and it is also to chastise these infidel dogs, themselves, — to hurry them more quickly to destruction. They are mad to deny God's power while making use of it and enjoying the perpetual miracle of his goodness. Go, infidel!" he cried, raising his hand toward heaven as if to call down lightning upon the stranger. "Go, ingrate, who turnest thy back upon the Lord! God looks into the depths of thy soul."

At the other end of the caravan rode a Persian with a white beard and a high hat of black sheepskin. He was the poorest and the oldest of the company. He was also the most despised, for he belonged to a heretical nation. The old man seemed unconscious alike of his age, his poverty, and his isolation. He spoke to no one, ate sparingly, and smoked all day. Mounted upon a half-starved camel, he spent his time in fingering the ninety-nine beads of his rosary, lifting meanwhile his trembling head toward heaven and muttering inarticulate words.

The poor man's gentleness and piety touched Abdallah's heart. Too young to hate any one, the boy turned from the skeptical European and sought refuge in the conversation of this Persian heretic.

The animated face and sparkling eyes of the young guide made an impression upon the Persian, who with a kindly smile invited the confidence that he discerned in the boy's expression.

"My son," he said, "may God give you the knowledge of Aristotle, the wisdom of Plato, the good fortune of Alexander, and the happiness of Khosru.¹"

"My father," cried the youth, "you speak wisely. It is knowledge that I want, — not the knowledge of a pagan, but that of a true Mussulman, to whom faith opens the doors of truth."

"Speak, then, my son," replied the old man; "perhaps I can help you. Truth is like a pearl. He only possesses it who has plunged into the sea of life and has torn his hands upon the rocks of time. That which you seek I may have found. Who knows whether I cannot show you the light for which you are looking, but which is no longer of any use to my dim eyes?"

¹ *Khosru*: a Persian monarch of the seventh century, who raised his nation to a high position, and whose love for his Christian wife, Shirin, has been celebrated in many an Oriental romance.

Encouraged by this sympathy, Abdallah opened his heart to the Persian, who listened silently. When the story had been told, the old man, in answer, drew from the mat on which he was sitting a shred of white wool, which he threw into the air. Then, swaying his body like a drunken man, and looking at Abdallah with a strange look, he improvised these verses :

" Fair cypress, — tulip with the ruddy cup,
Youth with eyes sweet and darker than the night,
See'st thou yon fleck upon the breeze borne up?
So, like a dream, our moments take their flight.

" The dew less quickly sinks into the sand,
The fading rose less quickly drops its bloom ;
Life lures and fails us. Gone at God's command,
'T is but the parting sigh before the tomb.

" God only is the same — always the same ;
And if within his book thou would'st, sweet boy,
The angel scribe should write thy blessed name,
Flee from the poisonous breath of fleshly joy.

" The body is a tomb wherein we move
Dimly, — a tomb with noisome vapors rife.
Happy the soul who, freed, finds God's great love.
To live is death ; to die in him is life."

" Your words set me on fire," said Abdallah, " but you do not answer me."

"What! my son," said the mystic. "Do you not understand me? The four-leaved clover is not to be found on earth. You must seek beyond. The four-leaved clover is only a symbol. It is the impossible, the unattainable! Do you wish to possess it? I will tell you the secret. Mortify the flesh; be blind, deaf, dumb; leave the highway of life; become as a wanderer in the realm of night; give yourself up to holy raptures; and when your heart beats no more, when you have put upon your brow the glorious crown of death, then, my son, you will find eternal love and be swallowed up in it, like a drop of water in the great ocean. That is life!"

The old man seemed as if he were in a dream. His lips trembled; his eyes were fixed and sightless. A vision seemed to transport him far from earth. Abdallah returned sadly to Hafiz and told him of his new disappointment.

"My son," said Hafiz, "beware of these madmen who make themselves drunk with visions, as others do with opium and hashish. When one enters the city of dreams he is lost."

CHAPTER VIII

THE JEW

Youth is the season of hope and enthusiasm. In spite of his discomfiture Abdallah did not tire of questioning the pilgrims whom he conducted to Mecca. He looked always for some happy chance ; but Persia, Syria, Egypt, Turkey, India, were silent. None had heard of the four-leaved clover. Hafiz rebuked his curiosity, but Halima comforted him by still sharing his hope.

One day when Abdallah, sadder than usual, had gone to his tent, asking himself if he should not leave his tribe and seek in foreign lands the talisman which always eluded him, a Jew entered the door, asking for food. He was a little old man, clothed in tattered garments and so thin that his girdle seemed almost to cut him in two. Leaning upon his staff, he slowly dragged along his feet, which were bandaged with rags. From time to time he raised his head and looked about him as if imploring pity. His yellow, wrinkled brow, dull eyes, thin lips which scarcely concealed his lack of teeth, unkempt beard which fell upon his breast, —

everything about him told of suffering and misery. The stranger saw Abdallah, and held out toward him a trembling hand, saying feebly, "O master of the tent, behold a guest of God!"

Abdallah was absorbed in thought, and heard nothing. A negress, who was nursing a child in a neighboring tent, saw the Jew; and hiding the child to keep him from the "evil eye," rushed out, crying to the stranger, "Begone! Would you bring misfortune to us? You should be stoned!" Then she called to the dogs and set them upon the wretched traveler. The old man tried to run, but his feet became entangled in his garments and he fell with a heart-rending cry, too weak to escape the animals that were already upon him.

His cry aroused Abdallah, who in an instant ran to the rescue, drove off the dogs, threatened the negress, and then, taking the old man in his arms, carried him into the tent. There he washed the stranger's feet and hands and dressed his wounds, while Halima brought dates and milk.

"My son, let me bless you," said the old man, while the tears ran down his cheeks. "The blessing of the meanest of mankind is not contemptible in the sight of the Lord. May God remove far from you jealousy, sorrow, and pride, and may he grant you wisdom, patience, and peace, — for these are the

good things which he has promised to the generous-hearted."

That night, gathered about their simple meal, Hafiz, Abdallah, and the Jew talked long together. Hafiz could not quite overcome his disgust at the sight of the aged wanderer, but Abdallah listened with interest as the old man told of his travels, for he had been everywhere. He knew all about Muscat and India and Persia; he had visited Europe and crossed the deserts of Africa; just now he had come from Egypt through the Sudan, and was going to Jerusalem by way of Syria.

"What I have sought is not wealth, my dear host," said the Jew. "More than once have I seen it by the wayside and passed it by. Poverty, our wise men say, befits the children of Abraham as the red harness befits the snow-white steed. What I have sought for more than fifty years, over deserts and seas, in weariness and misery, is the word of God. The holy tradition tells us that the unwritten word which God gave to Moses upon Mount Sinai was given by Moses into the keeping of Joshua, transmitted by Joshua to the seventy elders, by the seventy elders to the prophets, and by the prophets to the synagogue. After the destruction of Jerusalem, our rabbis collected fragments of it in the Talmud, but they were far from having it all. As

a punishment for our fathers' sins God divided his truth and cast it to the four winds of heaven. Happy the man who can bring together these scattered fragments! The children of this age may despise and hate him, but their insults are to his soul like a thunderstorm to the parched earth; they break it, but, in breaking, they water it and make it bring forth fruit."

"And are you that man, my father?" asked Abdallah, so moved by the words of his guest that he no longer thought of him as an infidel. "Have you found this treasure? Have you the whole truth?"

"I am only a worm of the earth," replied the Jew; "but from my boyhood I have questioned the rabbis; I have asked them to reveal to me the secrets of the law; I have searched in the cabala¹ for that wealth which is held of no esteem in the markets of the world; I have wished to know the mystic language of numbers which holds the key to all truth. How far have I succeeded? God only knows, — to whom be praise! One thing is certain. The angel Raziel disclosed to Adam the mysteries of Creation, and who dares say that this revelation is lost? If any man has lifted a corner of the veil, he has nothing further to hope or to fear upon earth; he has had his day and is ready to die."

¹ *Cabala*: the mystic philosophy of the Hebrews.

"My father," asked the young Bedouin, trembling with eagerness, "has your learning taught you of a mystic leaf which gives to him who possesses it wisdom and happiness?"

"Surely," replied the old man, smiling; "it is mentioned in the Zohar,¹ among other marvels."

"It is the four-leaved clover, is it not?"

"Perhaps," said the Jew, with a frown; "but where did you hear this name?"

When Abdallah had finished his story the old man looked at him tenderly. "My son," said he, "the poor often repay hospitality better than the rich, for it is God who pays their debts. The secret which you seek I discovered long ago in Persia. If God has guided my steps to your tent, it is doubtless because he has chosen me to bring you the truth. Listen, then, and write on your heart what I shall tell you."

Hafiz and Abdallah drew close to the old man, who in a low, mysterious voice told them this legend:

"When our first parent, Adam, was driven out of paradise, he was allowed to take with him into the world the date palm for his food, and the camel, made of the same clay as himself, for his helper."

"That is true," said Hafiz. "The camel is made for us, and we for the camel."

¹ *Zohar*: "The Book of the Splendor," — a cabalistic book.

"When the flaming sword drove before it those first sinful ones, Adam cast backward a look of despair at the home which he was forced to leave, and as a parting souvenir he plucked a branch of myrtle. The angel permitted it, for he remembered that at God's command he had once done homage to the man whom, now, he pitied."

"True," said Hafiz, "it was the same branch that Hobab¹ gave, long afterwards, to his son-in-law, Moses; it was the staff with which the prophet kept his flocks, and with which, later, he performed the miracles in Egypt."

"Eve, also," said the old man, "paused, in tears, before those flowers and trees which she should never see again, but the sword was pitiless, and she was obliged to flee. Just as she went out, she snatched one of the blessed herbs that grew in paradise. The angel shut his eyes, as he had done with Adam. What was this herb? Eve did not know. She had seized it in her flight and had it shut up tight in her hand. She would have been wise to have kept it so, but her curiosity was stronger than her prudence, and as she crossed the threshold she opened her hand to look at it. The plant was the brightest of all the herbs of paradise. It was the

¹ *Hobab*: the name given in Numbers and Judges to Moses' father-in-law, the priest of Midian, called Jethro in Exodus.

four-leaved clover. One of the leaves was red, like copper ; another was white, like silver ; a third was yellow as gold ; while the fourth glittered like a diamond. Eve stopped to look at her treasure, but the flame touched her. She started ; her hand trembled ; the diamond leaf fell inside the gate ; the other three, driven by the wind, were scattered abroad. Where they fell God only knows ! ”

“ What ! ” cried Abdallah, “ have they never since been seen ? ”

“ I think not,” said the Jew, “ and it is possible that this story is only an allegory which covers some deep truth.”

“ No, no,” said Abdallah, “ that cannot be. Try to remember. Perhaps you can find some new clew. I must have this plant, cost what it may. I long for it, and with God’s help I will have it.”

The old man hid his face in his hands and for a long time remained wrapped in thought. Abdallah scarcely dared to breathe, for fear of disturbing him.

“ I have thought long and closely,” he said at length, “ and I can remember nothing more. Perhaps my book will tell me something.” So saying, he drew from his girdle a yellow manuscript with a greasy black cover. He turned the leaves slowly, one by one, examining a number of geometric figures,

squares, concentric circles, numerals and alphabets, some of which began with *aleph*,¹ while others began with *tau*.¹ "There is," said he, "a bit of verse which is often repeated in the Sudan. It may interest you, but I do not know whether or not it refers to the legend I have told you :

"There 's an herb of mystic power ;
But 't is not to mortals given
To behold it, leaf or flower.
Seek it not ; it blooms in heaven !

—Patience ! patience !" he added, noticing Abdallah's excitement. "The words have more than one meaning. The ignorant seek for truth upon the surface, but the wise follow it to the depths and capture it, thanks to God ! Do you not know what one of our great teachers, the rabbi Halaphta, son of Dozzi, says ?

"Seek not for heaven in yon far azure skies
Where pales the moon, where glows the burning sun,
For heaven is in the reach of every one,
And a pure heart, my child, is paradise.

—Yes," he continued, lifting his voice, "I see a light. If God brought us together, it was doubtless because he wished to grant your wish, but beware of

¹ *Aleph* is the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet and *tau* the last.

anticipating his will by vain curiosity. Obey his law ; follow his commandments ; make a heaven in your soul ; perhaps some day when you least expect it you will find the prize which you desire. This, at least, is all that my knowledge can tell you."

" Well said, old man ! " cried Hafiz. Then putting his hand on Abdallah's shoulder, he added : " God is the master of the hour. Be obedient and wait."

♦

CHAPTER IX

THE WELL OF ZOBEIDE

The night was sweet to Abdallah. More than once he saw in his dreams the mysterious four-leaved clover, and when he awoke he urged the friend who had given him this new hope to remain longer with him, but the Jew refused.

"No, my son," said he, "a night under your tent is enough. The first day of a visit the stranger is an honored guest, the second he becomes an annoyance, the third a burden. You have nothing more to learn of me ; I have nothing more to tell. It is time for us to part. Only let me thank you once more and pray God to keep you. If we do not turn our faces in the same direction¹ when we pray, we are at least both children of Abraham, and we both worship the same God."

The only concession that the Jew would grant to Abdallah's hospitality was to mount a camel and allow the two friends to accompany him a day's journey. Hafiz had overcome his prejudices and

¹ The Mohammedans turned their faces toward Mecca when they prayed ; the Jews turned toward Jerusalem.

had taken a genuine liking to the stranger ; and Abdallah hoped to gain some new light upon the subject that lay nearest his heart. But the sight of the desert awakened other thoughts in the mind of the old Jew, and he forgot the stories of the night before.

"If I mistake not," said the Jew to Hafiz, "we shall find on this route the well which the sultana Zobeide¹ caused to be dug, long ago, when on a pilgrimage to Mecca."

"Yes," replied Hafiz, "it is the memorial of Harun-al-Rashid. To the caliph and his godly wife we owe our finest gardens."

"A blessed memorial," said the Jew, "and one that shall remain when the world has forgotten what men call glory, — that is to say, blood uselessly shed and money foolishly spent."

"That is spoken like a son of Israel," replied Hafiz. "You are a race of merchants. A Bedouin reasons differently. To him there is nothing finer in the world than war. He who has not looked death in the face does not know whether he is truly a man. It is grand to fight in the midst of dangers. It is glorious to strike down an enemy and to avenge those whom we love. My nephew, do you not agree with me?"

"You are right, uncle, but war is not an unmixed delight. I remember one day when closely pressed

¹ *Zobeide*: the wife of Harun-al-Rashid.

by a Bedouin who was trying to kill me, I stopped suddenly and drove my sword into his breast. He fell. I was glad, but my joy was soon over. When I saw his dim eyes and his bloodstained face, I remembered that he had a mother, and that although she might be proud to have a brave man for a son, she must thenceforth live lonely and desolate, as my mother would have lived if I had been slain. And this man was also a Mussulman, — that is to say, a brother !

“ Perhaps, after all, it is you who are right,” added the young man, turning to the Jew. “ War is doubtless a fine thing, but to fight the desert, as the caliph did, — to compel the wilderness to fall back, by spreading abroad everywhere life and plenty, — that is grand ! Happy they who lived in the days of the good Zobeide ! ”

“ Why not imitate those whom you admire ? ” asked the old man of Abdallah, in a low voice.

“ What do you mean ? ” asked the youth ; “ I do not understand.”

“ Nor I,” said Hafiz.

“ It is because the eyes of youth are not yet opened, while those of age are blinded by habit. Why does this clump of acacias grow here in the midst of the desert ? Why do these sheep browse on grass which is almost green, when all around there is nothing but sand ? Why do the birds which run about among the

feet of the sheep dig up with their bills earth which is still full of tender sprouts? You see these things every day, and because you see them so often, you think nothing of them. So it is with all men. They would be amazed at the beauty of the sun if the sun did not come back to them every morning."

"That is true," said Abdallah, thoughtfully. "There is water under this grass,—perhaps one of the wells dug long ago by the caliph."

"Whoever finds this spring will find a treasure," said the shepherd. "Stay with us, stranger, and let us search for it together. You shall help us with your knowledge and we will share the results with you."

"No," replied the Jew; "he who is wedded to knowledge is wedded to poverty. For fifty years I have lived too happily with my studies to leave them now. Wealth is an exacting mistress. She demands one's whole heart and life. I am content."

The sun was sinking below the horizon. The old man climbed down from the camel, thanked his two companions, and embraced them tenderly, but would not allow them to go farther with him. "Do not be disturbed about me," said he; "there is nothing to fear when one has poverty for his baggage, old age for his escort, and God for his companion." So, waving his hand at them he pushed resolutely forward into the desert.

CHAPTER X

THE COPPER LEAF

It was not difficult to buy the piece of ground where the sharp eyes of the Jew had located the spring. A few acres of half-barren sand are worth little in the desert. Twenty duros, which Halima had once received from Mansur and had kept carefully in the bottom of an old vase, was enough to put Abdallah in possession of the coveted spot. Hafiz, always prudent, announced that he intended to build a sheepfold, and at once began to bring thither brushwood to conceal from prying eyes the work which was soon to be undertaken.

Among the women and children there was much curiosity. Soon it became common report throughout the tribe that Hafiz and his nephew passed their nights in digging for treasure. So at the close of the day when the flocks were led to water, and the shepherds, passing by, saw these two friends come out covered with sand, they wagged their heads and asked : " Who are these people ? Are they jackals hiding in their den, or dervishes digging their cells, or those who are about to die, making their graves ? "

"No," said others, "they are none of these. They are sorcerers making a path to the bottomless pit."

So their gibes continued and their laughter increased, for no one has yet invented a bridle that will curb the ignorant and the envious.

For more than a month Abdallah and his uncle dug with great vigor, but they made little progress. The sand caved in, and the night destroyed the labor of the day. Halima was the first to lose patience. She told her brother he was yielding to a child's notion. After a time Hafiz, discouraged, acknowledged the justice of his sister's reproaches and abandoned the enterprise. "It was a mistake to listen to that impostor," said he. "Could anything else have been expected from a foe of the true religion?"

Abdallah, though forsaken by his mother and uncle, did not allow himself to be discouraged. "It is for my people," he said, "and not for myself that I am doing this. If I fail, never mind; if I win, it will be worth all the time and effort." He spent another month building a wooden lining to the pit in order to keep the sand from falling in, and having made the work secure, began to dig again with new courage.

On the fifteenth day of the third month Hafiz, at Halima's request, determined to make one last

effort to convince his obstinate nephew. To argue with Abdallah was not an easy task ; the pit was already thirty fathoms¹ deep and the laborer was at the bottom. Hafiz threw himself down upon the earth, and stretching his head over the mouth of the pit, he cried, "Stubborn child, — stubborn as a mule, — have you sworn to bury yourself in this wretched hole ?"

"Uncle," replied Abdallah, in a voice which came from the depths of the earth, "since you are there, please draw up the rope and empty the basket ; that will help me to work more quickly."

"Unhappy boy," said Hafiz, more in pity than in anger, "have you forgotten the lessons which I taught you in your childhood ? Have you so little respect for your mother and for me that you so worry us ?"

"Uncle ! uncle !" cried Abdallah, suddenly. "I feel moisture ! The water is coming ! Draw up the basket or I am lost !"

Hafiz seized the rope, and it was well that he was strong, for, putting forth all his energy, he drew his nephew out of the pit, covered with mud, fainting, and half-drowned. The water roared and rushed up, filling the pit. Abdallah, when he came to his senses, was overjoyed at the sound ; his heart beat violently,

¹ A fathom is about six feet.

—and Hafiz had tears in his eyes. All at once the rushing ceased. The two companions looked in, and less than ten cubits¹ from the top of the ground saw a surface which reflected the light like bright steel. It was a bubbling spring of water. To let down a jar and draw it up again took but a moment. The water was sweet. Abdallah knelt down upon the sand and bowed his forehead to the earth ; his uncle did the same ; then, rising, embraced Abdallah.

An hour later, in spite of the heat of the day, the two Bedouins had set up over the well a great sakieh, or water wheel, with a chain of earthen pots attached to it. Two oxen turned the groaning wheel as it drew up the pots full of water, emptied them upon the yellow grass, and gave to the earth that which should soon clothe it with the freshness of springtime.

At evening, instead of going to the usual watering place, groups of shepherds stopped at the spring. Those who had once jeered at Abdallah now made much of him. "We knew this would come," said the old men. "Happy the mother of such a son!" cried the women. "Happy the wife of so brave and handsome a youth!" thought the daughters. And they all added, "Blessed be the servant of God and his children's children!"

When the tribe came together Abdallah filled a

¹ A cubit is about eighteen inches.

cruse with water as fresh as that of the well of Zemzem,¹ and carrying it upon his arm, presented it first to his mother to drink, and, after her, to each in turn. Last of all, he himself drank of it. As he put the vessel to his mouth and emptied it, he felt something hard and cold upon his lips. It was a little leaf of copper which the spring had washed up.

"What is this, uncle?" he asked of Hafiz. "Is copper to be found here in the desert?"

"O my son," cried the old man. "Guard it well! It is the most precious of treasures. God has sent it to you as the reward of your courage and your toil. Do you not see that it is like a piece of a clover leaf? The earth has opened to bring you from its depths this blessed gift. All is true which that honest son of Israel told us. Have faith, my child, have faith! Praise be to God, the matchless, the all-powerful, the only God! He alone is great!"

¹ *Zemzem*: a holy well at Mecca, within the temple walls. According to a legend, it is the spring which the angel caused to spring up in the desert to quench the thirst of Hagar and Ishmael.

CHAPTER XI

THE GARDENS OF IREM

Gardens rich with verdure and watered by living springs, fruit-laden boughs, palm trees, pomegranates, refreshing shade, — such is the paradise which the Book of Truth¹ promises to the faithful. Abdallah had a foretaste of this paradise on earth. A few years after his discovery of the spring, no more beautiful spot could be imagined than his garden, — a place of coolness and peace, delightful alike to the eye and to the heart. The white clematis twined its blossoms about the acacias and the olive trees; hedges of myrtle with their perpetual green separated neat squares of millet, barley, and melons; the fresh water, running in a score of rivulets, bathed the feet of the young orange trees; grapes, bananas, apricots, and pomegranates were to be found in their seasons, and flowers the whole year round. In this happy retreat where sadness had no place, the rose, the jasmine, the mint, the gray-eyed narcissus, and the wormwood with its blue flowers seemed to smile; and when the beholder was weary of admiring their beauty,

¹ Koran, xiii, 35; lv, 68; lxxvi, 11.

their sweet odor filled him with delight. And the birds! What thicket can escape their sharp eyes? From every quarter of the sky came these lovers of the fruits and flowers. It is said that they know the hand which feeds them. In the morning when Abdallah came out of his tent and spread his prayer rug on the dewy grass, the sparrows welcomed him with their glad chirpings; at sight of him the doves, hidden under the large leaves of the fig tree, cooed more softly; the bees lighted upon his head; the butterflies fluttered about him; flowers, birds, humming insects, running waters, all living things, seemed to thank him, all lifted up Abdallah's soul toward him who had given peace and plenty.

It was not for himself that Halima's son had desired riches, — for he shared them with his friends. At the foot of the garden he dug a deep basin where the water, falling in many a foaming cascade, kept its coolness during the drought of summer. The birds that flew about it attracted the caravans from afar. "What pool is that?" asked the camel drivers. "During all the years that we have crossed the desert we have never seen this well. Have we lost our way? We have filled our goatskins for seven days and lo! we find water on the third. Are these the Gardens of Irem¹

¹ Sheddad, king of Ad, having heard much of the delights of heaven, tried to make a palace and gardens which should rival

which no man may look upon? Has God forgiven that bold man who tried to make a heaven in the midst of the desert?"

And Halima replied to the camel drivers: "No, these are not the Gardens of Irem; this is not the palace of pride. What you see is the result of work and of prayer. God has blessed my son Abdallah."

And the well was called thenceforth the Well of the Benediction.

it in magnificence. A voice from the sky destroyed this monument of pride, or at least made it disappear from sight, though a certain Ibn Kelabah claimed to have found it again in the reign of the caliph Moawiyah. The Gardens of Irem are as famous among the Arabs as is the Tower of Babel among the Hebrews. — Koran, lxxxix, 6.

CHAPTER XII

THE TWO BROTHERS

‘ Three things delight the eyes,” says the proverb, “ running water, green grass, and beauty.” Halima knew very well what was needed in this green and well-watered garden to make it perfect. She often said to Abdallah that he ought to have a wife. Abdallah did not seem to hear. He did not care to marry ; his thoughts were elsewhere. Often he looked at the little copper leaf ; often he asked by what good deed or by what virtue he might please God and so obtain the only blessing which he wished. In the heart of man there is not room for two overmastering desires at the same time.

One evening, when old Hafiz was at his sister’s home, adding also his arguments to persuade this young colt of a nephew to submit to the bridle, the sound of a gun was heard in the distance, announcing the coming of a caravan. Abdallah arose and went to meet the strangers, leaving Halima sad at heart and Hafiz defeated.

He soon returned, bringing with him to the tent a man who, though young, was very large and stout.

The stranger bowed to Hafiz and his sister, looking at them intently ; then fixing his small eyes on Abdallah, he said, " Is not this the tribe of the Beni-Amer, and am I not in the tent of Abdallah, the son of Yusuf ? "

" It is Abdallah who has the honor to receive you," replied the young man. " All that you see is at your service."

" What ! " cried the newcomer. " Have ten years of absence so changed me that I am a stranger in this home ? Has Abdallah forgotten his brother ? Has my mother but one son ? "

Great was their joy at seeing Omar once more after so long a separation. Abdallah embraced him again and again. Halima went from one to the other of her children. Hafiz kept mumbling to himself that man is a wicked animal, that it was a crime to have suspected Omar of ingratitude, — and yet how many times had the old shepherd been guilty of it ! When supper was over Omar began to talk. Taking Abdallah's hand tenderly, he said, " How happy I am to be with you ! — and especially happy because I have come to do you a service."

" Speak, brother," said Abdallah. " Since I have nothing to fear, and nothing further to wish for, I do not know what service you can render me ; but danger often approaches without our knowing it, and nothing is so quick to see as the eye of a friend."

"It is not a question of danger but of fortune," replied Omar. "This is what has brought me :

"I have just come from Taif whither the Grand Shereef called me. 'Omar,' he said, 'I know that you are the richest and the shrewdest merchant in Jedda. You are known everywhere in the desert. There is not a tribe which does not respect your name, and which at sight of your seal will not undertake to furnish camels to carry your merchandise and brave men to defend it. On this account I have a high regard for you, and it is to give you a proof of this regard that I have called you hither.'

"I bowed respectfully and waited for the shereef to proceed. He stroked his long beard for some time, and then said hesitatingly : 'The pasha of Egypt, who regards my friendship as highly as I regard his, has sent me a slave who will be an ornament to my house, and whom, out of respect for him who has chosen her, I shall make my wife. It is an honor which the pasha does me. Although I am old, I accept it thankfully. But this slave is not yet here, and it is to bring her that I need your skill and prudence. She cannot land at Jedda, for that is Turkish territory ; she must therefore land at Yambo, in my domain. It is a long distance from Yambo to Taif ; there are in the desert wandering, lawless bands who sometimes disregard my authority. I do not wish to make war upon them

at the present time, neither am I willing to expose myself to insult. I want, therefore, a shrewd and able man to go to Yambo as if on his own business. It is a journey which you can easily make, and no one will think it unusual. What is more natural than that you should go to meet an important cargo, and who would attack you, a simple merchant, in a country where you have such resources and so many friends ? ’

“ Thus spoke the shereef. I tried to decline the dangerous honor, but he looked at me with a most terrible look. The wrath of a prince is like the roar of a lion ; to offend him is to be lost. So I yielded to what I could not help.

“ ‘ Commander of the Faithful,’ said I, ‘ it is true that God has blessed my work and that I have some friends in the desert. It is for you to command ; I hear and obey.’ ”

“ That is fine ! ” cried Abdallah. “ There are dangers to meet and glory to win ! ”

“ It is for this that I have come to you,” replied Omar. “ With whom should I share this noble enterprise except with you, my brother, bravest of the brave, except with the wise and careful Hafiz, except with your bold companions ? The Bedouins along the way have never seen me ; they know only my name, and instead of defending my caravan, they might rob it as they have done more than once. But

if you are there with your band, they will think twice before attacking us. It is your place, then, to take the lead in this affair, and yours to receive all the honor. You see I speak very frankly. I am only a merchant ; you are a man of action. It is said in the desert that I am rich, — and my money is coveted. My reputation for wealth is a danger rather than a help to me. You, on the other hand, are respected and feared. The name of the son of Yusuf is a power ; his presence is as good as an army. Without you I can do nothing ; with your aid I am sure to succeed in an adventure in which my head is at stake. Am I wrong in depending upon you ? ”

“ No,” said Abdallah ; “ we are both links of one chain. Woe to him who attempts to break it ! We will set forth to-morrow, and whatever may happen, you shall find me beside you. Brothers are born to be of help to one another when the days are evil.”

CHAPTER XIII

THE CARAVAN

That night everything was made ready for the departure, the goatskins filled, the provisions packed, the bales of hay counted out, the harness examined. Abdallah selected the surest-footed camels and the most experienced drivers. That was not all. He engaged twelve brave young companions, of well-proved courage, who laughed at weariness and warfare. They were proud to follow the son of Yusuf. His look commanded respect ; his word touched the heart. His saber always ready and his hand always open, he was the boldest of chiefs and the tenderest of friends. In his presence men were as strong and calm as the hawk in the cloud. As for Hafiz, he took no time for sleep that night. Cleaning the guns, trying the powder, molding bullets, sharpening sabers and knives, was work which he loved and which he would intrust to no one.

As soon as the stars began to fade the caravan started on its way, Abdallah at the head with Omar by his side, while Hafiz brought up the rear, ever watchful and offering a word of warning or encouragement

wherever he felt that it was needed. The camels plodded leisurely along, in single file, and the drivers sang snatches of songs. In the center walked proudly a noble dromedary of the Oman breed bedecked with gold, silk, and glistening plumes, and bearing a litter hung with brocade and velvet, intended for the use of the shereef's bride. Abdallah's twelve companions, well mounted, accompanied the caravan, the silver pommels of their saddles, their Damascus swords, and the gold embroidery of their black burnouses¹ glistening in the first rays of the rising sun.

Then came Abdallah's mare, led by a servant. Nothing more beautiful could be imagined. She was the glory of the tribe and the envy and despair of all the Bedouins. She was called Hamama, the dove, because she was so white, so gentle, and so fleet.

Abdallah, dressed like a simple camel driver and armed with a long iron-pointed staff, was on foot, while Omar, beside him, rode contentedly upon a mule. They were among friends. There was nothing to fear. So the brothers talked for hours about old times and their boyhood's days. When the noonday sun beat down upon them and the burning wind oppressed both beasts and men, Abdallah

¹ *Burnoose*: a long cloak with hood attached, worn by the Arabs.

slowly and gravely chanted one of those hymns of the desert which beguile the tiresome journey :

" God alone is great !

He causeth the earth to bloom and maketh it desolate ;
He rendeth the mountains ; he hurleth the thunder ;
He raiseth the whirlwind and breaketh the rocks asunder ;
Let the wild winds proclaim his state !

God alone is great !

" God alone is great !

At his word the fierce storms abate.

He scattereth the rain cloud ; he setteth the sun on high,
Holding the waves that no longer they terrify ;
Listen ! The south wind with praise is articulate : —

God alone is great ! "

At the sound of this hymn it seemed as if even the beasts forgot their weariness and walked with a firmer step. The camel drivers lifted up their faces. Every one was refreshed as with a draft from a running brook. It is the strength of the soul that gives strength to the body, and for the soul there is no strength but in God.

So passed the first day. The day following, greater care was taken. Hafiz went forward to reconnoiter. They started before the sun had risen, proceeded silently, and stopped earlier than upon the day before, but they saw no one. The next day and the next passed quietly, and on the evening of the ninth day they saw at last the walls and towers of Yambo.

CHAPTER XIV

NEW THOUGHTS

At the waterside they found the object of their journey. A small boat from the ship brought ashore two women wrapped in black mantles. Their faces, except the eyes, were covered with long veils of white muslin which fell to their feet. Omar received the strangers with a respectful bow and led them to the waiting caravan. At the sound of Abdallah's voice the dromedary knelt down upon the sand. Then one of the women stepped into the litter and gracefully seated herself, drawing about her the long folds of her robe. The other approached with no less dignity, but all at once snatching off her mantle and veil, she threw them over Omar's head, winding the veil about his face as if she would smother him; then putting one foot upon the camel's neck, she leaped into the litter like a cat, making faces at the astonished Bedouins and shouting with laughter.

"Kafur, you shall be whipped," cried the veiled lady, who found it hard, herself, to keep from laughing. But Kafur paid little attention to the threats of her mistress. With her head thrust out of the

litter and her arms akimbo, she waited until Omar unwound himself, meanwhile laughing and mocking him.

When the son of Mansur had at length freed himself from the mass of silk under which he had been buried, and in a fine rage turned to see who had so insulted him, he was astonished to find the Bedouins and even the grave Abdallah smiling. They shrugged their shoulders and pointed at his persecutor.

She was a negro girl, and very ugly. Her face was round and flat, with small eyes, the whites of which were hardly visible, a nose flattened to the level of the cheeks, large nostrils from which hung a silver ring falling below the mouth, thick lips, teeth as white and glistening as those of a young dog, a chin tattooed with blue. To add to her ugliness she was covered with trappings like an idol. On the top of her head she wore a tuft of parrot feathers. Her thick, woolly hair was combed into little rolls and decorated with gold coins. From her ears, which were pierced like a sieve, hung earrings of every shape and size. A necklace of five rows of blue enamel plates glistened upon her throat; seven or eight coral, amber, and filigree bracelets encircled her arms from the wrist to the elbow; finally, she wore on each ankle an enormous silver

ring. Such was Kafur, the favored slave of her beautiful mistress, Leila.

The feeble-minded always have special privileges. They are said to be especially beloved of God, their spirits being in heaven, while their bodies continue on earth. So all the caravan except Omar, who still nursed his grudge, made friends with this poor, foolish little negro girl. It was only too evident that her mind was not clear; she talked and laughed from morning until night; she made sport of every one, and her judgments were for the most part quite unreasonable.

For example, she looked for a long time at Omar, who, half-reclining on his mule, rode near the litter, surrounded by his slaves, and slowly smoked his Persian tobacco in a jasmine pipe. One of the servants having filled the pipe too full, the son of Mansur gave him a box on the ear. "Mistress," cried Kafur, "do you see that old man with his feet in the big slippers, and himself in a cushion? He is a slave driver! Look out, mistress! He would beat us for a duro and sell us for a sequin." Leila began to laugh, while Omar in a great rage threatened Kafur. To call a person who counted his piasters by the millions "an old man" and "a slave driver" was surely the act of an idiot! Who in his right mind would have dared to speak so?

It was soon Abdallah's turn. He was inspecting the caravan and had put on his war dress. Every one admired the grace of the young chief. His white burnoose floated in long folds ; in his belt glittered the inlaid butts of his pistols and the silver hilt of his sword ; a turban of red and yellow silk shaded his eyes and added to the majesty of his looks. How handsome he was ! All hearts went out toward him. Even Hamama, his mare, seemed proud to carry such a master. She tossed her graceful head with its rich golden trappings. Fire seemed to flash from her dilated nostrils. To see her start, prance, stop short, and again leap forward at Abdallah's command, it would seem as if horse and rider were one.

" See, mistress ! " cried the girl, as she leaned upon the neck of her camel. " See his fine clothes, his slim fingers, his handsome eyes ! I think it is a woman in disguise, — the beauty of the tribe ! Say, camel driver, make her get up here with us. This is the place for her."

" Be silent, infidel ! " said Abdallah, losing patience. " Must we put a ring in your lips to stop your tongue ? "

" Yes, it is a woman ! " cried Kafur, laughing still more boisterously. " A man would not talk back like that. Come, women should be friendly to each



*"Even Hamama, his mare, seemed proud to carry
such a master"*

other. You are handsome, so am I ; but my mistress is the handsomest of the three. Look ! ”

The eye is quicker than the thought. Abdallah raised his eyes to the litter. Kafur playfully took hold of her mistress's veil, the frightened Leila drew back her head, the fastening gave way, the veil fell. Leila gave a scream and covered her face with her hands. It was all done in an instant.

“ How beautiful she is ! ” thought Omar. “ The shereef cannot have her. She shall belong to me.”

But Abdallah only murmured to himself, “ Glory to him who has created so perfect a woman ! ”

The caravan marched on, but the chief fell back. Leila had hidden herself again within her mantle, yet there seemed to float before Abdallah the vision of her face.

Hafiz, who brought up the rear, soon found his nephew beside him. Surprised at the silence of the young chief, the shepherd approached him and touched his arm, saying, “ My son, something has happened, has it not ? ”

Abdallah started, and recovering himself like a man awakened from a dream, he replied sadly, “ Yes.”

“ Is the enemy near ? ” cried Hafiz, with flashing eyes.

“ No one threatens us,” said the young man. “ The danger is not there.”

"Where is it then, my son?" asked Hafiz, anxiously. "Are you ill? Have you a fever? You know I have some skill as a physician."

"It is not a fever," replied Abdallah. "At the next halting place I will tell you all."

When the caravan stopped Abdallah took his uncle aside. The old man sat down upon his rug and began to smoke, without saying a word. The young chief, wrapped in his cloak, stretched himself out upon the ground and remained a long time motionless. All at once he seized the old man's hand and kissed it. "Uncle," he said, "I pray that God will help me. What he wills must come to pass. There is no power but in him." And then he told of the vision that had disturbed him.

"O my son!" said the old shepherd with a sigh; "happy is he who chooses from his own tribe a virtuous and obedient wife, but wretched, he who allows his heart to be caught in the snares of a foreigner. Can anything good come out of Egypt? From the time of Joseph all Egyptian women have been wicked and treacherous."

"Uncle, speak not of treachery. It was accident—or fate. But in two days we shall be at Taif; in two days we shall be separated forever; yet I feel that I shall never forget her,—that I shall always love her."

"Yes, you will love her, but she will forget your face for the first jewel which her new master gives her."

"Perhaps so," said Abdallah, sadly, as he stretched himself on the ground with his burnoose under his head. But he did not believe what his uncle had told him.

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CHAPTER XV

THE ATTACK

Abdallah arose in the morning more disturbed than the day before, but he tried to forget himself in the preparation for the day's journey.

"Courage, nephew! Be of good cheer!" said Hafiz, as they rode together. "It is expected of all men that they shall suffer, and of all Mussulmans that they shall be resigned."

"What is that?" he added, suddenly leaping from his horse and examining the ground. "These are the marks of horses' hoofs. There are no camel prints among them. An armed band has passed this way. The marks are fresh."

The two men looked as far as their eyes could reach, but saw only sand, rocks, and sky. They were in the midst of a desolate region. The trail wound among huge masses of reddish granite which lifted themselves out of the sand like crumbling ruins. Great cracks yawned in the earth, caves appeared among the rocks, the dry beds of mountain torrents crossed their way, — it was a place where graves seemed to open for the traveler on every side.

Not a bird in the sky, not a gazelle in the distance, not a speck on the horizon! Only a brazen sky above and the silence of death on every hand.

Hafiz hastened to the head of the caravan. Each man fell into line. All were as silent as night. No sound was heard except the crunching of the sand under the feet of the camels. After proceeding thus for an hour — and it was an hour which seemed almost endless — they came to a hill. Hafiz, who was ahead, climbed it, leaving his horse halfway up. As he approached the top he threw himself upon the ground and crawled between the rocks, where he remained for a long time, gazing out over the plain; then he descended softly, mounted his horse, and galloped to Abdallah's side, his face as calm as when he departed.

"There are white tents on the plain," said he, "and they are not the tents of Bedouins. They are Arnauts' tents. We have been betrayed. But what matter? We will sell our lives dearly. Forward, my son! Do your duty." And examining his gun, he again went up the hill.

Abdallah had but just reached the head of the caravan when a white puff of smoke appeared from behind a rock, a bullet whizzed by, and one of the camels fell. At once the caravan was thrown into the wildest confusion. The camels fell back, rushing



"At once the caravan was thrown into the wildest confusion"

together and tumbling over each other in their haste ; the drivers fled to the rear ; the horsemen spurred forward their steeds. It was like a forest shaken by the tempest. The cries of the camels and the whinnying of the horses mingled with the shouts of the men. At the first alarm a swarm of brigands, whose red jackets, white trousers, and broad sashes showed them to be Arnauts, dashed from behind the rocks, surrounded the dromedary bearing the litter of the princess, and while some beat back Abdallah's band, others, shouting triumphantly, hurried away with the prize. Three times did Abdallah and his brave men charge upon them ; three times was he forced backward by the foe, while several of his companions fell around him, pierced with bullets. Behind stood Omar, tearing his robe, — Omar, whose passion overcame his cowardice, and who thought only of the treasure which was being snatched from him. " Forward, brother ! " he cried. " Forward ! "

Abdallah urged his horse forward for a final charge, when suddenly the report of another musket was heard, and smoke was seen upon the summit of the hill. The Arnauts had not counted upon old Hafiz, who now opened fire upon them from above and picked off three of their number. The remnant, taken by surprise and thinking that reënforcements were arriving to protect the caravan, fled with their prize.

When the way had thus been opened, Abdallah and his remaining companions dashed forward, followed by the old shepherd.

"Gently, my son," said Hafiz. "Spare your horse. We have time enough."

"These brigands will not wait for us," shouted Omar. "Twenty duros to the man who will shoot the dromedary!"

One of the Bedouins raised his gun and, taking aim, fired, at the risk of killing the two women. The great animal fell, struck in the shoulder, and carried down with him to the ground his precious burden.

"Well done, young man," said Hafiz, looking sarcastically at the Bedouin. "The Arnauts will thank you for that shot. You have removed the only hindrance to their flight. Now the lady is lost!"

Hafiz's judgment was only too correct. The brigands leaped to the litter and took from it a woman wrapped in a black mantle, whom Abdallah recognized as Leila. At the command of a gorgeously attired chief, one of the horsemen took her behind him and set off upon a gallop. Seeing this, Abdallah darted on the enemy like an eagle out of a cloud.

"Halt!" cried he to the chief. "If you are a man, show your face. Is it to flee that you have so fine a horse?" And drawing his pistol he fired.

"Wait," said the captain, turning around. "I shall have time to kill you."

"On, on!" cried Hafiz. "Charge, my sons! Death rather than dishonor! Charge! Bullets do not kill. What God wills shall come to pass!"

Abdallah and the Arnaut dashed at each other, their horses galloping at full speed. The captain carried a pistol in one hand and a sword in the other; Abdallah had only a dagger which he grasped tightly, leaning forward as he rode, with his head close to the neck of his mare. The captain shot at Abdallah, but missed. In an instant the two horses had dashed together, and the riders met in a hand-to-hand struggle. But Abdallah had the strength and fury of a lion; he seized his opponent around the waist and plunged the dagger into his breast.

"He will never shoot again," said Hafiz.

The fall of the captain, the fierce attack of the remaining Bedouins, who recovered themselves and flew at the enemy like bees robbed of their honey, and the assistance of the camel drivers as, rushing forward, they seized the guns of the fallen and opened fire, decided the battle. The troop of Arnauts disappeared in a cloud of dust and smoke, the bravest of them remaining in the rear and discharging their guns as they fled, to protect a retreat which the Bedouins were in no condition to hinder,

for the victory was dearly bought and many were wounded.

"Forward, my friends!" cried Abdallah. "One more effort! We must save the lady."

"She is here, sire! She is here!" replied several voices. Abdallah turned quickly. He saw before him Leila, whom they had dragged from the litter, covered with dust, her face pale, her hair blown about her shoulders, and in this disorder more beautiful than ever.

"Save me!" she cried, stretching out her arms toward him; "save me!"

"Who is it, then, that those rascals are carrying away?" demanded Hafiz.

"It is Kafur," said Leila; "the poor child had put on my mantle, and wrapped me in her bur-noose."

"Well played!" said one of the Bedouins, laughing; "these dogs have taken a monkey for a woman."

"Let us proceed on our journey at once, my friends!" cried Omar. "Let us begone! The victory is ours. Come, madam, do not weep for your slave. We will give you another. For two hundred duros I can buy one in Jedda just like her, which I shall be very happy to present to you."

"Let us go," said the camel drivers. "The Arnauts have a large company and they will return

to attack us when they find how they have been deceived."

Hafiz looked at Abdallah.

"What!" said the young chief, moved with pity. "Shall we leave the poor negress in the hands of these wretches?"

"What is written, is written," replied Omar, who had lost all desire to fight. "Is it wise, my brother, to risk your life and the lives of these brave Mussulmans to run after a heathen whose place we can fill in two days? We must move on. They are waiting for us at Taif. Surely, you will not leave us now?"

Abdallah struggled for a moment with himself. "I must," he cried at length. "It shall never be said that a Bedouin failed to keep his word. If a bag of coffee had been placed in my care, I would not have left it in the hands of these robbers, — and shall I give up to them one of God's creatures? Are there not men here? Who will go with me?"

There was a dead silence. Then one of the Beni-Amer, stepping forward, replied: "Six of us are wounded and the lady is saved. We have done our duty."

"Come, my son," said old Hafiz, bitterly. "I see that there are only two among us who have madness in our veins. Let us go. With God's help we will find the child."

"Farewell, brother," said Abdallah, turning to Omar. "Take good care of the stranger. If in two days you do not see me, say to the shereef that I did my duty."

And without lifting his eyes, he started off across the desert, followed by Hafiz, who, as he did so, threw off his burnoose and put over his shoulders, instead, a camel-driver's sack. "It is not the lion's hide that we need," said the old man, with a laugh, "but the skin of the fox."

Omar followed them with his eyes until he saw them disappear in the distance. "If they do not come back," he thought, "what matter? I shall drive a better bargain with the shereef than I could with that young man."

Abdallah, as he hurried on, heard behind him the cries of the camel drivers and the noise of the caravan preparing to set forth. All that he loved he was leaving behind him for the sake of an unknown and unlovely slave. More than once he wanted to look back; but he felt that his uncle's eyes were fixed upon him, reading his very heart. When the last sound died away in the distance, he stopped in spite of himself. His mare turned, sniffing the breeze as if anxious to rejoin her companions. Hafiz placed his hand on the young man's shoulder. "My son," said he, "your path lies straight ahead."

CHAPTER XVI

THE RECOVERY

After an hour's ride the tents of the Arnauts, hidden before by the rising ground, came into view. Their camp was surrounded by a scrubby growth of sagebrush into which the animals had been turned to graze.

"Let us stop here," said Hafiz, checking his horse behind a huge rock, the top of which was glistening in the last rays of the setting sun; "we have six hours to wait."

When their horses had been tethered the old man began to pick up a quantity of dry brushwood, which he tied in small bundles, placing in the middle of each some cotton and gunpowder with which he had supplied himself for the purpose before leaving the caravan. When he had finished his task he took from a bag a piece of dried meat and a handful of dates, and having shared them with Abdallah, he lighted his pipe and smoked peacefully.

"Now, my son," said he, "I am going to sleep. Lovers have no need of sleep, but old men like it.

You may wake me when the Great Bear¹ and her cubs are down there over the sagebrush."

A moment later he was asleep, while Abdallah, with his face buried in his hands, thought of her whom he had saved and whom he should never see again.

Hafiz awoke, without being called, a little before the time which he had set. He looked tenderly at his young companion. "Come, my boy," he said; "you wished for danger so that you might forget your folly. Your wish has been granted. Let us go forward. Two friends who stick together in trouble shall go through the fire without hurt."

They stealthily crept toward the camp, and gliding among the briars and bushes and under the bodies of the horses, they assured themselves that all was quiet. The guards had been posted at some distance from the camp, and these they had passed in safety. Every one here was sound asleep; the fire had gone out; there was but a single light, which came from the inside of one of the tents. The two companions approached it noiselessly and lay flat upon the sand. As they were in the deep shadow, they could see without being seen.

Three men, equipped somewhat better than ordinary soldiers, were seated upon rugs around a

¹ *Great Bear*: the constellation Ursa Major, known also as the Dipper, or Charles's Wain.

taboret on which was a pot of coffee. They were smoking long pipes. The flame from a small lamp lighted their faces dimly. All three were talking with great earnestness.

"A bad day's work!" said one of the officers. "Who would have thought that the captain would have allowed himself to be killed by a camel driver?"

"My dear Hasan," replied the youngest of the three, "one man's misfortune is another's blessing. The captain is dead; hence to us belongs the command."

"You are right, my dear Mohammed," returned Hasan; "but which of us three shall be chief?"

"I will sell my chance," said the one who had not yet spoken, and whose back was turned toward Abdallah. "It is said that the woman whom we have taken is a relative of the pasha of Egypt. Give her to me, and I will return to Epirus to spend the rest of my life in peace. A graybeard like myself cares little for the fair sex, but the shereef may feel differently. To him the prisoner will be worth as much as five thousand duros."

"Done!" said Hasan. "Kara Sheitan, I yield to you my share of the prize."

"But I do not," added Mohammed. "I am twenty-five; I do not sell women. The idea of marrying a princess pleases me, and I should not

object to becoming the cousin of the pasha. I give my share of the command for the lady; there is time enough in which to become captain."

"It can be arranged," said the oldest. "To one of you the command, to the other the captive, but to me — money!"

"So be it," said Hasan; "I will give two thousand duros."

"And what will Mohammed give?"

"Mohammed," said the young man with a laugh, "will promise you anything you wish. When one has only hope in his purse, he does not stop to bargain."

"You have a black mare. I will take her."

"Dare to touch my mare," cried Mohammed, "and I will crush you."

"You shall not have the lady, then," replied Kara Sheitan.

"Who will hinder me?"

"One who has no fear." So saying, the older man went to the back of the tent and took hold of the curtain which divided it. "The stranger is here," he said; "come and take her."

Mohammed drew his dagger. Hasan threw himself between the two combatants, meeting their insults and threats with entreaties and good advice, but without being able to quiet them.

"We have them," whispered Hafiz in Abdallah's ear. "I am going to draw them out of the tent. Take the child. Dash away with the horses, and wait for me at the Red Rocks until sunrise."

Hafiz crept softly away, and taking the bundles of sticks in his arms, placed them here and there under the most distant of the tents, lighting, as he did so, a fuse which projected from each bundle.

By entreaties and promises Hasan had now quieted the two chiefs. Kara Sheitan contentedly thrust a magnificent saber into his girdle, while Mohammed eyed it with regret.

"Well," said the young man, "since I have bought the lady, give her to me."

"You are right," replied the graybeard, as he called to the stranger in a loud voice. The curtain was lifted and a veiled lady appeared, wrapped in an Egyptian mantle. The young Arnaut approached, saying gently: "Madam, war has its rights. You belong no longer to the shereef, but to me. I have given up my sword for you; I would have given up my life."

"It is too high a price," replied a mocking voice.

"Beauty is priceless," added Mohammed. "What wealth could pay for all your charms?"

"Two purses would be plenty," replied the veiled lady.

"Madam, that was not the shereef's judgment. The Commander of the Faithful would give half his wealth to be in my place and to have beside him the beautiful Egyptian."

"If the caravan is still moving," replied the lady, "the beautiful Egyptian will be in Taif to-morrow."

"Who, then, may you be?" demanded Mohammed.

In answer, the veil fell and disclosed the black face and gleaming teeth of Kafur. The negress cut so strange a figure that the eldest of the three could not restrain a laugh, — which aroused the wrath of his young companion.

"Woe to him who has trifled with me!" cried Mohammed, eying Kara Sheitan. "I shall have revenge, sooner or later. As for you, dog, you shall carry the joke no further." And blind with rage, he drew a pistol and fired at the child. She staggered back with a cry of pain and fright. At the same instant there was another flash. Mohammed turned and fell. Abdallah was standing over him with a pistol in his hand.

"To arms!" cried the other two chiefs, grasping their weapons. Swifter than lightning Kafur overturned with her foot the table and the lamp which stood upon it. Abdallah felt in the darkness a little hand grasping his own and drawing him to the

farther end of the tent. It was but the work of an instant for Kafur to glide into her apartment and to lift a corner of the canvas. She seemed to see in the dark. Once outside, Abdallah took the child in his arms and fled into the desert.

The noise of the shots had awakened the whole band, but when they rushed into the tent, they did not find the intruder.

"To horse!" cried Hasan. "Dead or alive, the scoundrel shall not escape us."

At that instant a blaze sprang up in the midst of the brushwood. Other fires appeared in several of the tents. The whole camp was soon in flames. The frightened horses dashed away into the desert. The flames spread in every direction; and in the distance shots were heard, showing that the sentinels were firing or being fired upon.

"Come on, my men," cried Hasan. "It is a concerted attack. The enemy is before us. Forward!"

Old Hafiz had his ear to the ground. "God is great!" he cried, as he heard them coming toward him. "Abdallah is saved!"

He plunged into the brush and let the Arnauts pass. Then, leaping upon a stray horse, he galloped into the desert, careless of the bullets that whistled after him.

CHAPTER XVII

THE SILVER LEAF

Abdallah hastened with his burden to the rock where the horses had been tethered. He then placed the child on the saddle before him and gave loose rein to Hamama, who flew over the ground, followed closely by Hafiz's horse. An hour passed before the son of Yusuf dared to pause and listen. Then growing calmer as he left the enemy behind, he checked the horses' speed and directed his course through the darkness toward the spot where he was to meet his uncle.

During this swift flight Kafur had remained mute and motionless, clinging to Abdallah ; but when she knew that the danger was past, she whispered her thanks to him for saving her life.

" Were you, too, a prisoner ? " she asked.

" No ; thank God ! " replied Abdallah.

" Then why did you venture among your enemies ? "

" Why ? " said the son of Yusuf, smiling. " To save you, I suppose. "

The reply surprised Kafur. She was thoughtful for some time.

"Why," she asked, "did you wish to save me?"

"Because you were intrusted to my care."

"Keep me always, Abdallah. No one else will protect me as you have."

"I am not your master," replied the young chief ;
"you belong to Leila."

Kafur sighed, but said nothing. When they had reached the Red Rocks, Abdallah lifted her from the saddle. She gave a sharp cry, which the next instant she smothered. "It is nothing, master," she whispered ; "I am wounded, that is all." She held out her bleeding arm. The ball had struck the shoulder and glanced, tearing the flesh. Abdallah examined the wound as carefully as he was able by the light of the stars, then bandaged it. Kafur looked on in amazement.

"Since I do not belong to you," she said, "why do you trouble yourself about me?"

"Peace!" he said. "You do not know the words of the Book of Truth. 'Be good to thy father, to thy mother, to thy family, to the orphans and the poor, to thy neighbor who is of thy kin, and also to thy neighbor who is a stranger, to thy companions, to the traveler whom thou meetest, to the slave whom thy hand possesseth, for God loveth not pride nor selfishness nor avarice.'"¹

¹ Koran, iv, 40.

"That is beautiful," said Kafur. "It is a good god who said that."

"Now go to sleep," said the young man, interrupting her; "to-morrow the journey will be long."

As he spoke Abdallah wrapped the child in his mantle and laid her gently on the ground. Kafur soon fell asleep, but her sleep was troubled; she talked aloud. Little by little, however, she became more calm; her limbs relaxed; and Abdallah could scarcely hear her breathe. He watched tenderly the poor young creature whom the chance of war had given to him for a day.

Around him all was still. Over the desert no sound was heard, no breath of air was stirring; in the sky the only movement was the slow march of that glittering host which has for so many centuries obeyed the command of the Eternal. The peace of nature stole into Abdallah's soul; he forgot the dangers of the day and the anxieties of the morrow.

The dawn had scarcely been announced by a lighter tint on the eastern horizon when the baying of a jackal sounded in the distance. Three times was the cry heard. Abdallah repeated it. The cry came back again. Then a panting horse stopped suddenly before the rocks, with Hafiz clinging to his neck. The old shepherd was safe.

"Well, nephew," said he, smiling, "the trick has

succeeded. They were smoked out like rats. Up! We must not let them wait for us at Taif."

A rosy light covered the eastern sky. Abdallah spread out his prayer rug, and the two comrades, turning their faces toward Mecca, thanked the Almighty who had saved them from danger.

"Abdallah," cried Kafur, throwing herself on her knees before her rescuer, "you are my god; I will worship you!"

"Silence!" exclaimed the son of Yusuf. "There is but one God; there is no other like him; it is to him that you should pray."

"Let your god then be my god," said Kafur. "I do not want a god who will not protect me."

"Your god," said Abdallah, "is blind and deaf and dumb. It is some piece of wood — is it not? — which is rotting away in a temple down in Maghreb.¹"

"No," said the child; "my god was with me all the time and did not help me; you may have him"; and drawing from her hair a tuft of feathers, she held it out toward Abdallah. "Take him! Break him! I despise him!"

"Is that bunch of feathers your god, then?" asked Hafiz, smiling.

"Yes," replied the child; "he is the god which my mother gave me when she sold me. Is he not

¹ *Maghreb*: a region in northern Africa.

pretty? Look at him!" And pulling out the feathers, she broke them, one by one, scolding at them as she did so. Finally, she drew out of the midst of the bunch a little silver leaf, which she gave to Abdallah.

"Uncle," cried the young man, "see what has come to us out of Maghreb! God has sent us the clover leaf. Glory and thanks be unto him!"

The two, beside themselves with joy, embraced the child, who, not understanding, looked at them with moist eyes, astonished and happy at feeling that some one cared for her.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE SECRET

Night was approaching when the three riders saw at length the caravan in the distance winding over the desert like a huge serpent. The rays of the setting sun shone upon the white houses of Taif, which glistened in the midst of their gardens. The desert was left behind ; danger was overcome ; the journey was finished. Yet at sight of Taif, Abdallah was overcome with bitter sorrow. One thought alone filled his mind, — Leila was lost to him.

The Bedouins greeted their restored companions with joyful cries. As for Kafur, she threw herself down at Abdallah's feet and would not leave him until he had commanded her to return to her mistress.

As she went toward the litter, Omar called her aside and showed her two objects which he held in his hand. " Come here," he said in a tone half bantering, half threatening ; " do you know the difference between this pearl necklace and this stick ? "

" The same difference that there is between your brother and you," she replied. " One is as beautiful as a rainbow, the other is good for nothing."

"You are witty," said Omar, quietly. "Then it will not be hard for you to choose. Do you want the necklace?"

"Surely," replied the girl, her eyes sparkling. "What must I do to get it?"

"A very little thing. In an hour you will be in the harem. They will all want to see you. Nothing will be easier than for you to find your way to the shereef's wife, the Lady Fatima. Be careful to repeat to her, word for word, what I shall tell you, — and the necklace is yours."

"Give it to me," said Kafur, holding out her hand. "I hear you and I will do as you say."

"When you have found her and have made her laugh with your monkey tricks, whisper to her, 'I have a message for you from a friend.' She will listen. Then repeat these words: 'Moon of May, a new moon is approaching. If you do not wish it to trouble the quiet of your nights, keep the sun in the sign of Gemini. Urge, beseech, command! Take for your motto, *Love is like madness; everything is forgiven it.*'"

"Say that last sentence over again," said Kafur. "Good! I know it now. 'Love is like madness; everything is forgiven it.' The Lady Fatima shall have your message. But stop! Can these words do your brother any harm?"

"None whatever," replied Omar, hiding a smile. "This has nothing to do with Abdallah. He is in no danger. If he were, these words would insure his safety. Good-by. Say nothing to any one, and if you do as I tell you, you may expect me to be generous." Then he added to himself: "I am rid of the handsome Abdallah. Now I must stir up the Lady Fatima's jealousy and add to the troubles of the shereef. The game is not without danger, but cost what it may, Leila must leave the harem.¹ When she leaves it she is mine."

When Kafur rejoined her mistress she found her pale and anxious, her eyes feverishly bright. "What is the matter?" asked the child. "Are you crying when your happiness is just about to begin? You will have four slaves to wait upon you. You will be given satin and velvet dresses, cashmere scarfs, slippers embroidered with gold and pearls. You will have enameled necklaces, diamond brooches, bracelets of rubies and sapphires. What more could a woman wish? When you left Egypt, you were happy in the thought of coming here. Why have you changed?"

"You cannot understand," replied Leila, sadly. "You are only a child."

¹ *Harem*: that part of a Mohammedan house occupied by the women of the family. Also the women themselves, taken together.

"I am no longer a child, mistress," replied the girl; "I am almost twelve years old. I am a woman. You can trust me."

"Ah, my poor Kafur!" said Leila with a sigh. "If you would keep your heart, you must close your eyes. Why was it my fate to see this handsome youth? If it had not been for him, I should have entered the harem with joy; now, I shall be like the dead in the midst of the living."

"Do you love Abdallah, then?" asked the child, touched by the confidence.

"Do I love him! Could any one see him without loving him? Is there anywhere in the world a nobler face than his, a glance more kind, a voice more sweet?"

"Run away with him," said Kafur. "I will tell him to carry you off."

"What are you thinking of? I am a slave. I have a master. Besides, do you think Abdallah would ever break his word? It is he that is taking me to the shereef. Would you have him betray his trust?"

"Then tell the shereef to give you Abdallah for a husband."

"Hush, child! that would be the death of us all."

Kafur thought for a moment and repeated to herself Omar's message. Then looking at Leila, she said, "Mistress, if you should be Abdallah's

wife and should go to live with him in the desert, would you keep me always with you ? ”

“ Always, my child, for I love you, and you shall never leave me.”

“ Should I be your slave and Abdallah’s all my life ? ”

“ Surely ; but what is the use of such a question ? ”

“ Promise me that,” said the child, solemnly, “ and let me do the rest. Do not ask me any questions nor shake your head so doubtfully. What danger is there in promising me ? Do you want to drive me away or sell me ? ”

“ Certainly not. If it were God’s will that I should be the wife of him whom I love more than my own soul, you should always live with us. I promise it.”

Thus talking, the two came to the harem, where a large company awaited them. Kafur, laughing, leaped down from the palanquin and entered a great hall, brilliantly lighted, in which were tables covered with silver and flowers. Leila complained that the journey had tired her and went to her room, that she might weep without restraint. Vain tears, wasting themselves upon a sorrow which they could not heal !

CHAPTER XIX

THE FOX'S PATIENCE

Abdallah wished to start for home on the evening following his arrival. Hafiz, too, was impatient to be off ; it seemed to him that in fleeing to the desert his nephew would leave behind anxiety and sorrow. But the shereef had announced that on the next day he would receive the chiefs of the caravan, — an honor which could not be declined.

At an early hour they went to the palace. The courtyard was full of Bedouins clothed in blue robes, with scarlet sashes thrown over the shoulder. They all wished to shake hands with the brave Abdallah and the thoughtful Hafiz. Omar talked in a low voice with the old shepherd. For the first time he complained to Hafiz of the dangerous journey ; for the first time he reproached the shereef with having needlessly exposed brave men to almost certain death. Hafiz agreed with him so warmly as to quite delight the wily Egyptian.

The visitors were led by black slaves into a hall covered with rich carpets and furnished with divans of green silk embroidered with gold. The walls

were bare except for a beautiful Turkish saber, — its handle set with topazes and rubies, — a gift from the Sultan. Omar pointed this out to Hafiz, who, though muttering to himself at what he considered a weakness, yet bowed before the shereef with no less respect than was shown by the other visitors.

After having received the salutations of all the company, the shereef clapped his hands, and straightway pipes and coffee were brought in. The Bedouins sat down on the floor and each began to smoke in silence. Abdallah at this moment was startled by the sight of Kafur among the crowd of servants that awaited their master's orders. She raised her hand to her throat. Was it to him or to some other that she made this sign? He could not guess. No one appeared to notice her, — least of all, Omar.

The shereef seemed plunged in deep thought. He was an old man of fine appearance, whose white beard, Roman nose, and calm gaze gave him an air of majesty. A large turban, a robe of the finest blue cashmere, a girdle of purple and gold in which glittered a dagger set with gems, added still more to the dignity of his presence. At heart, the shereef was a philosopher who thought only of himself. Though relentless toward those who disturbed his peace, he was the mildest of men when his passions or his wishes were not crossed. Authority had not spoiled

him. He was willing to hear the truth when it did not interfere with his pleasure, and he endured without protest the most barefaced falsehoods when spoken in flattery by his attendants. Fastidious, a lover of stories, and a poet withal, his chief weakness — a weakness natural to his age — was the desire to be loved. Thanks to this secret, which she had very soon discovered, the Lady Fatima made of her husband the most obedient of slaves. She made him submit to all her whims by telling him that a woman's caprices are a proof of her love. At sixty, it is easier to believe than to quarrel. The shereef yielded to avoid a storm, quite happy when he was paid with a caress. This morning, however, there seemed no cloud on the horizon. The Commander of the Faithful was in excellent humor; he smiled as he stroked his long beard; he looked approvingly upon his visitors.

When the second pipe had been finished, the shereef made a speech in which he graciously thanked the Bedouins and Omar for their visit and for their services. Instead of replying to the shereef's compliments, Omar started up like a terror-stricken criminal, and prostrating himself before the descendant of the Prophet, kissed his feet.

"Son of Ali and of Hasan," said he in a broken voice, "I know what the slave deserves who has

been so faithless as to let his master's trust be violated. I know my crime. I wait without complaint for the punishment which your justice shall mete out to me."

"Rise," said the shereef, kindly. "What is written, is written. God sends to men in turn, disaster and success, in order that he may know the faithful and choose his witnesses from among you.¹ As for the insult which has been offered to me by those thieves, I will choose the day and the hour for my revenge. Patience! With patience all will turn out well in due season."

"Alas," replied the son of Mansur, still kneeling. "The attack was nothing. My brother Abdallah and his brave Bedouins drove off the traitors. But during the journey the face of the slave was for a time unveiled and her beautiful features which should have been considered sacred were looked upon by unworthy eyes."

"Enough!" interrupted the shereef, to whom the conversation was becoming unpleasant. "The care of my honor concerns me alone. Patience!"

"Patience!" cried Hafiz. "That is what the fox said when he pretended to be dead."

"What did the fox say?" asked the shereef, looking sternly at Hafiz, who gave no indication of fear.

¹ Koran, iii, 134.

"There was once a fox," said the Bedouin, "who was growing old. He had given up hunting and all other sorts of adventure, and spent his nights in a poultry yard near his den, where he grew fat without trouble or danger. One night he forgot how time was flying; when he was ready to leave the yard, the sun had risen and everybody was at work. To get home again was dangerous; so, in order to save himself from attack, he conceived the idea of stretching himself out and pretending to be dead. 'Patience!' said he; 'in patience there is safety.'

"The first who passed by paid no attention to him; the second turned him over with his foot to make sure that he was not alive; the third was a child, who amused himself by pulling out the fox's whiskers.

"'Patience!' said the fox; 'this child does not know what he is doing. He does not mean to insult me. It is better to suffer a little annoyance than to expose one's self to death!'

"Then came a hunter with his gun on his shoulder. 'The claw of this animal,' he said, 'is a sure cure for a felon.'

"And he drew out his knife.

"'Patience!' said the fox; 'it is better to live with three feet than to die with four,' and he allowed himself to be maimed without a murmur.

"Finally, a woman came, carrying a baby on her shoulder. 'With the teeth of that beast,' she said, 'I will make a necklace for my baby, to protect her from the evil eye.' "

"I know the story," interrupted the shereef. "When the mother approached, the fox flew in her face."

"My story does not say so," replied the old man, gravely. "When once we compromise with our courage, we do not know where to stop. The fox allowed his teeth to be pulled out, saying, 'Patience, patience,' and stayed there until the last robber took away his heart. He thus found, too late, that patience is the surest of dangers."

"I begin to believe so myself," said the shereef, "since a Bedouin beards me in my palace with his foolish stories. A shepherd must be rude indeed to misunderstand my indulgence and to insult my kindness. If the caravan has been attacked in a safe country, where merchants are passing all the time, it is the fault of those who chose a child for their leader — a child whose life I am merciful enough to spare. A dozen Beni-Amer, armed and resolute, can cross the desert any time without danger of attack. If the Arnauts attacked you, it must be that a snare was laid into which you fell either willingly or very foolishly."

"Sire," cried Omar, lifting his hands in supplication, "you have spoken truly. It is my fault. In choosing as chief of the caravan my brother and my friend I ought to have thought that at our age love makes us blind. A chance look was our undoing. At the beginning of the journey the young man had a glimpse of the slave, and from that time it made him forget all prudence."

"What do I hear?" exclaimed the shereef, with flashing eyes. "Is this the way I am obeyed? Is this the way I am respected? Woe to him who trifles with me! He shall see whether I will allow myself to be insulted. You, merchant, shall be punished for your imprudence, and you, young man, shall pay the price of your folly."

And calling a negro who carried a large saber at his side, the Commander of the Faithful pointed to Omar and Abdallah and cut the air with his hand. It was the sentence of death.

CHAPTER XX

SAVED BY A PROVERB

The Bedouins looked at each other with a shudder, but no one — not even Hafiz — dared to rebel against the descendant of the Prophet. Omar received the sentence apparently without concern. He looked about him as if seeking aid, and raising his hand, made a sign to the negress, which she did not seem to understand. He scowled wrathfully. "Cursed be the dervish!" he muttered. "Can it be that he told the truth? Has my faith in this Bedouin ruined me? Can I have loved the fool better than I ought?"

Abdallah raised his eyes to the executioner and smiled proudly.

"Poor child," cried Hafiz, embracing his nephew, "I have killed you."

"No, my father," replied the young man. "It is God who gives both life and death. Take heart and comfort my mother. Do not pity me. To me death is better than life."

Then turning to Omar, whose eyes were fixed constantly upon the negress, he held out his hand.

"Brother," said he, "forgive me, for the sake of her who watched over your childhood."

Having thus spoken, he bowed respectfully to the Commander of the Faithful, then knelt down, and was ready for the stroke.

"Stop!" cried Kafur, falling at the shereef's feet. "It is I who am to blame. I snatched away my mistress's veil. Kill me, but spare Abdallah."

"Drive off this dog," said the shereef, "and beat her until she is quiet."

"Have mercy!" cried the child, as she was being dragged away. "Have mercy!" And with a desperate effort she tore herself out of the grasp of the slave who was dragging her, leaving a piece of her dress in his hands. "Have pity!" she moaned, as she embraced the feet of the shereef, but he repulsed her brutally. "Pity, lord! Abdallah is not to blame." Then all at once noticing the scowl on Omar's face, she sprang up like a flash of lightning, and stretching out her arms toward the shereef, exclaimed: "Be not cruel. Remember that love is like madness; everything is forgiven it."

"Wait," cried the shereef to the executioner. Then, to himself: "This is a strange thing. It is the same phrase that Fatima repeated to me this morning and that she would not explain." Turning to Kafur, he then said more mildly: "Come here,

child. Where do these words come from? Do you know?"

"Yes, I know," replied Kafur; "they come from lips which speak only consolation and pity."

"Do you know what they mean?"

"Yes," replied Kafur, trembling as she spoke. "But Omar has for a long time known their secret. Ask him. He will tell you."

"O my lord," said Omar, dragging himself to the shereef's feet and speaking in a half-whisper, "the child is right. I know too well the meaning of these words. They were the cause of my fault and will perhaps excuse it. Who can deceive a jealous heart? When you called me to Taif, some one who is very dear to you had a suspicion of your message. Before I left your palace this one had exacted a promise from me, which I have faithfully obeyed. I have allowed the Egyptian to be dishonored and her face to be looked upon by men, as I was ordered to do. Could I resist a will protected by your love? Happy are you to be able to inspire such love in return. Will not this happiness make you forgiving?"

All the time that he was speaking these unblushing falsehoods, Omar studied the shereef's face, which had now regained its calmness. Soon he ceased to supplicate, and, sure of his ground, began to flatter. Thus gradually, by cunning words, he

soothed the last traces of resentment which still lingered in the old man's heart.

"Arise, I forgive you," said the shereef at length. "I also forgive that fierce Bedouin, who has braved me even under the sword of the executioner. I have shown that I fear no one and that I know how to punish an insult. That is enough. I will keep the lives of my followers for a more worthy end. Young man," he added, looking at Abdallah with a smile of encouragement, "remember that henceforth your life belongs to me. I depend upon you to avenge our common insult. I depend also upon your friends."

In response the young man, deeply moved, took the shereef's hand and kissed it, while Hafiz could not contain himself for gratitude and joy.

"Here!" said the Commander of the Faithful, calling Kafur. "Come here, daughter of the night. Was that all the Lady Fatima said to you?"

"No," replied the girl, assuming a mysterious air; "she told me also that if you pardoned her mad love, she must have a proof of your devotion."

"Speak," said the shereef. "How can I refuse a poor creature who loves me to the point of madness?"

"The Lady Fatima fears that you will refuse her prayer, for to grant what she asks would require as great a love, she thinks, as her own."

"What does she want?" asked the shereef.

"Well," replied Kafur, "she does not wish the presence, here, of this stranger who has been dishonored by the gaze of Arnauts and Bedouins. 'Let my husband,' said she, 'let the well-beloved of my heart give me a final pledge of his love. Can he not leave this Egyptian to those who brought her here? Among the Bedouins it will be easy to find an honorable match for her, and I shall be left free to devote myself to the lord of my life.'"

"How weak these women are!" cried the shereef. "The Koran is right in commanding us, who have strength and good sense, to be considerate. This jealousy of Fatima's is madness. I should blush to yield to it, were it not that I wish to show her that there is no limit to my power or my love. Go and bring Leila."

Then turning to the Bedouins, he said in a loud voice: "My friends, I make you the judges of my conduct. What ought I to do with this Egyptian woman whom you have brought me? Out of respect for myself, I cannot take her as a wife; out of respect for the pasha, I cannot keep her as a slave. This, then, is my proposition. If there is any one among you who wishes to marry her, I will give her to him with a suitable dowry; otherwise, I will marry her to some rich merchant of Medina or Mecca."

"God is great!" cried Abdallah, seizing Hafiz's arm. "Let us seek no longer for the four-leaved clover! It is here! It is mine! I have found happiness."

"Courage is necessary, even for happiness," replied Hafiz. Then looking at the shereef, he added: "You need not send to Mecca to arrange a marriage for this young woman. If you want a husband for her, here is a young man who has no superior among us as regards birth, fortune, or courage."

"My lord," interrupted Omar, bowing to the shereef with great respect, "I have never had the boldness to lift my eyes to a woman intrusted to my care, but since the circumstances are changed, I will, with your permission, dare to aspire to the hand of Leila. She is a slave of the pasha; from her birth she has been accustomed to the comforts and luxuries of the harem. Coming here, she dreamed of a fortune, which has escaped her. Who knows whether tent life may not seem to her rather rude? Wealth is a necessity to a woman who has always lived in a palace. I pray your lordship, therefore, to give her to the one among us who shall offer the largest dowry. That will be a crowning mark of kindness toward one who owes all to your generosity and who is not unmindful of the obligation."

“That is a reasonable request,” replied the shereef. “Let the young Egyptian be brought hither. Let her suitors come also. I will hear their proposals.”

Kafur looked at the two brothers for a moment and then darted into the harem.

CHAPTER XXI

THE DOWRY

While the attendants were seeking for Leila, Hafiz approached Omar and said : " Omar, listen to an old man who many a time has held you, as a child, upon his lap. They say that you are richer than your father. Women bow before your fortune ; there is not a merchant in Egypt or Syria who would not consider it an honor to ally himself with you. Nothing hinders your wishes. Abdallah, on the other hand, can never love another woman. He has given his heart to her whom he has saved. Be generous. Pay to-day a debt of gratitude by insuring the happiness both of your brother and of Halima."

" My brother is a selfish fellow," replied Omar. " I have already suffered too much on his account. He knows that I want this Egyptian. He knows that I will have her at any cost. Why, then, does he declare himself as my rival ? If he makes me lose a hundred thousand piasters on his account, what good will that do him ? Let him renounce Leila and I will forget, perhaps, that to-day, for the second time, he has endangered my life."

"It is fortunate for you that you are a Mussulman," said Hafiz. "Otherwise we would show you before the end of the day that an ounce of lead weighs more than all your gold. But you have not yet won your point. With God's help we shall still outreach you."

Omar shrugged his shoulders and went forward to meet Leila. She had just entered, hidden from all eyes by the ample folds of the garment in which she was wrapped. Kafur followed. Had she told the Lady Fatima? Who knows? But she wore a necklace of rose coral which surely had not been made for a slave. From time to time she ran to a latticed balcony that looked out from the harem upon the hall in which they were assembled. There she exchanged mysterious words with figures faintly visible through the screen. All the harem were there, deeply interested in the fate of the fair Leila, and perhaps offering prayers for the son of Yusuf.

Abdallah spoke first. "All my fortune," said he, "is the spring which I discovered, the garden which I planted, the weapons which my father left me, and the horse which I have trained. These are yours, fair Leila, if you will accept my heart and hand."

"They are not worth a hundred thousand piasters," said Omar, sneeringly. "Here in Taif I have an orange garden where the shereef has occasionally

had the goodness to take coffee with me. This garden is worth more than two hundred thousand piasters. I offer it to Leila as a pledge of an equal sum in jewels."

"As for jewels," said Hafiz, "my nephew has a store of them as rich as yours. Here is a casket which is worth all your promises."

To the astonishment of all present, Hafiz, assisted by Kafur, opened a casket of tortoise-shell and pearl, filled with earrings, bracelets, and gems. Abdallah could hardly repress a cry. Was not that ruby bracelet the one which Leila had worn on her arm the day of the attack? Was not that coral necklace the one which Kafur had just taken from her neck? He tried to speak, but a gesture from his uncle stopped him.

"Pretty jewels, but they are secondhand," said Omar, biting his lips. "I do not ask where all these woman's trinkets come from. I value them at their true worth. But not to allow my generosity to be outdone, I will offer three hundred thousand piasters."

"To promise is not to give," interrupted the old shepherd. "Something more than words is necessary here."

In response Omar drew a wallet from his girdle and took out of it a number of papers, which he gave to the shereef. "My lord," said he, "here are

the orders which you gave me several months ago. I have fulfilled them. They represent more than a million piasters. Will your lordship refuse to be security for his servant against these exacting Bedouins until to-morrow ? ”

“ It shall be as you wish,” said the shereef. “ I will be your security for a hundred thousand piasters.”

“ If only that amount is needed,” said one of the Bedouins, “ we will not leave a companion in trouble. We will teach a lesson to this merchant, who has forgotten himself. Here are our sabers. We will redeem them with a hundred thousand piasters ” ; and taking off his scimitar, he threw it at the shereef’s feet, with a scornful glance at Omar. Hafiz approached to do the same and to set an example to the rest of the band.

“ Take back your saber,” said the shereef. “ I will be security for you and your friends. God forbid that I should see you disarmed, — you who are my strength and my pride. Omar,” he added, “ before making any new promises, perhaps you would do well to reflect. Repentance often follows the accomplishment of one’s wishes. You cannot find friends when once you have lost them.”

“ Commander of the Faithful,” replied Omar, proudly, “ it is upon your surety that I have engaged in this affair. Command me to stop, and I

will obey ; otherwise I will continue to the end. I fear no one's displeasure but thine. And to put an end at once to this tiresome business, I offer a million piasters. It is not too great a dowry for a woman whom your lordship has honored with his protection."

"Are you rich enough to indulge in such madness?" said the descendant of the Prophet. "I will remember this when I have need."

"Only command, lord," replied the merchant. "My fortune and my life are yours!"

There was a deep silence. Leila, who until that time had been standing, sank upon a couch. Abdallah bowed his head. Hafiz and the Bedouins made threatening gestures at Omar, who faced them with a scornful air. Kafur began to make strange signs toward the balcony and soon disappeared. All eyes were fixed upon the shereef, who was evidently undecided.

"I have given my word," he said at last, slowly, addressing the Bedouins. "You are witnesses that all has been done justly. This merchant, your comrade in the caravan, has offered a dowry of a million piasters; he, then, shall wed the young woman unless one of you has more to offer."

"Who could find such a sum in the desert?" cried the old shepherd. "We have but our guns and

our sabers. May the day come quickly when their worth shall be felt ! ”

“ You forget Abdallah’s jewels,” said Omar, with a sneer.

“ O my brother,” cried the son of Yusuf, “ what have I done that you should treat me thus ? Ought you to be the one to plunge a dagger into my breast ? ”

“ What have we here ? ” asked the shereef, as two black slaves brought in a heavy casket of silver, richly carved, and laid it at Abdallah’s feet.

“ O master,” replied one of the porters, “ it is the treasure of the son of Yusuf.”

Thereupon, opening the casket, he displayed handfuls of the most beautiful jewels that could be imagined. It was evident at a glance that they were worth far more than a million piasters.

“ It is strange,” thought the shereef, “ how much that diamond necklace and those topaz bracelets resemble the jewels which I have given to Fatima.” Then, turning to the slave, he asked, “ Who sent you ? ”

“ O master,” replied the slave, prostrating himself before the shereef, “ love is like madness ; everything is forgiven it,” — and he went out.

Abdallah looked on as if in a dream, but Omar grew pale with rage.

"There is some snare here," he muttered in a choking voice; "but no matter. I will have the last word. I will give two million piasters if necessary."

Four more slaves, heavily loaded with plate, silver lamps, and beautifully engraved cups paused, like the first, before Abdallah, laying their treasures at his feet. In an instant the shereef recognized a magnificent centerpiece which formed one of the chief ornaments of his harem. He had received it as a gift from the Sultan, and had given it to the beautiful Fatima the day after a quarrel.

"Who has given orders to bring hither these treasures?" he cried.

"O master," replied the porters, prostrating themselves, like the first, "love is like madness; everything is forgiven it."

"Let these knaves be beaten," said the Commander of the Faithful. "I will teach them to reply to me in proverbs! Who sent you?"

"O master," replied one of the slaves trembling, "it was Kafur."

"Bring me that child of Satan," said the shereef. "If she is left alone, she will carry away my whole palace."

The four slaves had scarcely left the room when six other servants entered, carrying a litter upon which had been heaped the costliest robes and the

most precious fabrics. At the head of the procession marched Kafur, directing them with the gravity of an emir.¹ The Commander of the Faithful called her to him, and taking her by the ear, said roughly, "Unhappy wretch, tell me, once for all, what means this foolishness?"

"Love is like madness; everything is for—"

"Do you dare to mix up the Lady Fatima with this disturbance?" demanded the Commander of the Faithful.

"Lady Fatima is there," replied Kafur, quietly, pointing to the balcony. "She has seen all, has heard all, knows all, — and," she added, lowering her voice, "she is furious."

"Furious? and why?" exclaimed the shereef, astonished.

"She knows," continued Kafur, "that you do not wish to give up Leila. She has guessed that this merchant is bidding in your name. 'Since my lord loves me no longer,' she says, 'I do not wish to keep his presents. Take from my sight the jewels which he has given me, the dresses in which I loved to array myself to please him. Take all to Abdallah, and let him fight for me to the end. If the master

¹ *Emir*: an independent military chieftain. Also a title of respect given to descendants of Mohammed and to high Turkish officials.

of my heart comes back to me, what need have I of riches? If he abandons me, I wish to keep only the remembrance of his love.' "

The shereef looked up at the balcony with some ill humor. Through the lattice he thought he could see a little hand tearing to pieces a lace handkerchief, while a sound of stifled sobs gave him a feeling of uneasiness. At the same instant it occurred to him that the friendship of the Beni-Amer was worth more to him than the gratitude of Omar, and his course was decided.

"I will not be made a party to unworthy weaknesses," he said solemnly. "I never take back a promise which I have given. I only wished to be assured of an honorable dowry for this young woman who is under my protection. A hundred thousand piasters is enough. As to deciding between these two rivals, that is Leila's affair. Let her choose between the merchant and the Bedouin, between the city and the desert; it matters not to me. I shall respect her choice and shall make others respect it."

"Neither David nor Solomon could have judged more wisely!" cried Hafiz.

The two brothers stood at Leila's side. Abdallah looked at her with deep tenderness, dumb with fear and hope. Omar, wrathful and jealous, thus

addressed her : "Think of the future and do not sacrifice for this man your youth and beauty. Do you know what sort of life is led by the women who dwell in tents ? It is a life of beggary and slavery. Were your hands made to pound barley, to herd sheep, to weave cloth, to gather grass and firewood ? Can this Bedouin give you the luxuries, the jewels, the perfumes to which you are accustomed ? Can he paint your eyebrows ? Can he wash your hair with orange-flower water and dry it with musk and ambergris ? With me you will have women to wait upon you, rich dresses in which to array yourself, diamonds to adorn you. You shall not be a servant, but a lady. Every whim of yours shall be a pleasure and a law to me."

Leila bowed, took the trembling hand of Abdallah and placed it on her head. "I am," she said, "my master's slave. A stranger, I have no other refuge ; an orphan, I have no other family. He is my father, my mother, my brother." And smiling and weeping at the same time, she kissed Abdallah's hand.

The Commander of the Faithful gazed delightedly at this sight, for it renewed his youth.

Omar was silent. His contracted brows, his threatening glance, his every movement, betrayed the conflict between disappointment and pride which was going on within him.

"Brother," cried Abdallah, seeing his distress, "pardon me my happiness."

"You are shrewder than I," replied Omar; "I congratulate you on your success." And he went out, overcome with despair.

CHAPTER XXII

GOING HOME

It is easier to keep money in the hand of a prodigal, or to carry water in a sieve, than to maintain patience in the heart of a lover. The sun had not risen, nor the birds left their nests, when Abdallah awakened his companions and arranged the camels in a long line, loaded with the gifts of the shereef and Fatima. He then waited impatiently the coming of Leila, whom Fatima had kept with her all night to make her tell the story of her love. When Kafur, homelier and with a wider grin than usual, opened the door of the harem and looked out, Abdallah uttered a cry of joy, for the figure behind her, stretching out her hand, — could it really be Leila? Yes, it was she; the lover could not be deceived. But it was not the Egyptian stranger, loaded with jewels; it was a Bedouin woman, who seemed always to have lived under a tent. She was clothed in a long robe of blue cotton, which was gathered about the neck and extended to the feet. Over this robe was thrown a burnoose of red wool, covering her

head. Her rich black hair fell over her forehead and added much to the sweetness and brilliancy of her expression. Clad in this simple costume, with her face unveiled and her feet bare, Leila was, in truth, a queen of the desert. The Bedouins joyfully saluted her as she came out, fresh and smiling as the dawn.

No time was lost in starting. A recent rain had freshened the grass and brought out a multitude of flowers which, glistening with moisture, smiled on these two happy hearts. Leila no longer hid herself in the back of the palanquin. Abdallah rode beside her and talked with her all the way, with his hand on the side of the litter. Kafur had never been more talkative or saucy.

"Ungrateful man," she cried to Abdallah, "you have forgotten all about me. You are like the one who carried off the bride of the caliph Moawiyah"; and, as happy as a lark, she began to sing:

"Take these purple robes away,
Give me my burnoose again;
Send me from these towers gray
To the tents upon the plain.
Colts and lambs within the fold,
Hounds that bark at all but me,
Please me more than cloth of gold,
More than softest minstrelsy.
Let some Bedouin, poor but free,
Take me far, proud lord, from thee."

Thus they proceeded all that day without thinking of heat or fatigue. When joy comes after grief, does one think of anything but joy? Then, too, Hafiz was there to look after the caravan; so Abdallah was free to devote himself to the bride whom he was bringing home in triumph. Night drew near as the tents of the Beni-Amer came in view. The sun was going down under the arch of a great rainbow which covered half the sky. A rosy glow lighted up the sands of the desert, and gleams of golden radiance glistened upon the tops of the granite peaks. In the distance were heard the creaking of the water wheel, the baying of the dogs, and the cooing of doves. All at once a glad cry of welcome greeted the travelers' return.

"What is that?" asked Leila.

"It is my mother's voice," replied Abdallah, leaping from his horse. "You will have two to love you."

Halima soon appeared, greatly astonished at the sight of so large a caravan.

"What are these?" she asked, pointing to the bales and bundles. "Has the son of Yusuf sold his horse and arms to become a merchant?"

"Yes, mother," answered Abdallah, "and I bring you the rarest and most precious of all goods, — a daughter, who will respect and help you."

Leila hastened down from the litter and threw herself into the arms of Halima, who, when she had recovered from her surprise, inquired the name of the young stranger's father and of her tribe. The sight of Kafur astonished her still more, and in spite of all that Hafiz could say, she retreated to her tent greatly disturbed ; for it must be confessed she was not favorably disposed toward a woman of another nation. But when, after having unloaded his camels, Abdallah came in and sat beside her, while Leila ran with a basin of warm water to wash her husband's feet, all prejudice vanished and she cried : " God be praised ! Here is a woman who will be indeed a helpmate to her husband. My house has at last found a mistress. I can die in peace."

With these words she tenderly embraced the daughter who had been sent to her.

" What is the matter, master," asked Kafur, who was lying at Abdallah's feet. " Has the smoke got into your eyes ? You look as if you wanted to weep."

" Hush, hush," whispered Abdallah, passing his hand lightly over the head of the child, as if he were stroking a faithful dog. Poor child ! Everything had been denied her and yet she had found her happiness in that of others.

CHAPTER XXIII

KARA SHEITAN

Omar returned to Jedda with death in his heart. In vain his slaves tried to amuse him ; in vain business and wealth came to him from all quarters. For days together he shut himself up in his chamber, sitting cross-legged on a rug and revolving in his head impracticable schemes of vengeance.

"Of what use is my father's wish?" said he. "Of what use my health and the treasure which I have gathered together? Am I not, in spite of them all, the unhappiest of mortals? That wretched Bedouin, in his poverty, triumphs over me; I, in my wealth, am sad and lonely. A curse upon life! A curse upon my brother! The oracle was not mistaken. I am slain by my best friend!" And he gave way to his despair.

The disappointment of Omar was the talk of the whole city. If little love was felt for the son of Mansur, his fortune, at least, was held in high esteem. He was asked if some service could not be rendered him, some consolation offered — for a consideration. After such an outrage, men said, he would probably

pay liberally for vengeance on that Bedouin. These remarks were not lost on Omar. It is the curse of the rich that they have always around them people ready to undertake any crime in their behalf. A poor man's passion is a flame which consumes the heart and then dies out; a rich man's is a brazier to which every one adds fuel, while out of it come fire, crime, and death.

One morning the son of Mansur received a visit from an Arnaut captain. He came, he said, on a matter of business which admitted no delay. Omar received him politely and called for pipes and coffee.

"Excellent coffee!" exclaimed the captain, sipping it; "as strong as death, as black as Eblis! And what a delicious blending of nutmeg, clove, and cinnamon! It is a fine thing to be rich; the world moves to suit you."

"People are sometimes mistaken about the happiness of the rich," said Omar, with a sigh.

"Pshaw! A rich man with a sorrow is like a miser who does not know how to use his money. If he loves a woman, he can buy her; if he wishes to get rid of a rival, he can pay for his skin. Anything can be bought nowadays. With money, one has everything."

"With whom have I the honor of talking?" asked the son of Mansur.

"I am called Kara Sheitan," answered the stranger. "I am an Arnaut chief, — one of those who attacked you in the desert. In killing my friend Mohammed, your brother Abdallah made me lose five thousand duros. Pay me that amount and I will rid you of him."

"A murder?" asked Omar.

"Nonsense!" replied the Arnaut, coldly. "Have no foolish scruples. When an opportunity offers itself, it is the part of wisdom not to let it slip. It is only justice to force our enemies to drink the bitter cup which they have made us taste. It is right to strike them with the weapon with which they first wounded us."

"But Abdallah is my brother," said Omar, as if hesitating.

"Your brother is your enemy. What matters it if he dies? You will have no hand in it. I will kill Abdallah as I would a dog, if I catch him in the desert. I will avenge my own quarrel; only, in order that I may properly avenge myself, I must have five thousand duros."

"How will your vengeance benefit me?" asked the son of Mansur.

"I don't know," replied Kara Sheitan. "I don't understand business as well as you do, but if I were in your place and Abdallah should disappear, it

would not take long for me to seek out the beautiful Leila. He has, they say, no family except his mother and an old fool of an uncle. Such obstacles can be easily removed with a little money and some resolution. It will not be a difficult matter to seize the bride. What is there to fear? The shereef? In Jedda they laugh at his authority. The pasha? He is a man like the rest of us."

"But the tribe. Have you thought of that?"

"The tribe is nothing," replied the chief. "I know these Bedouins have as much spite and malice as their camels, but blood can be bought like anything else, and money is not despised in the desert any more than in the city. The Beni-Amer will console themselves with Abdallah's inheritance."

"Yes," replied Omar, "death can be atoned for when the killing is unavoidable. A hundred camels is the price of a man's life under such circumstances, but for assassination there is no price. The punishment is death, — and they will kill me."

"The desert is silent," said the chief, "and the dead tell no tales. When a body is found in the sands, dried by the winds and the sun, it requires a shrewd man to tell a murder from an accident. But it is useless to speak further of this," he added, rising. "What do I care for the charming Leila, whom I have never seen? Let her love her Bedouin

husband, let them be happy together, and let them laugh at the son of Mansur. It is all the same to me. After all, Abdallah is a brave fellow. I think well of him. But if you had put upon him the insult which you have received at his hands, he would not haggle about the price of his revênge. Farewell."

"Wait!" cried the son of Mansur. "You are right. So long as Abdallah lives, there will be no peace for me on earth. This was foretold from my birth, and I have always known it. Deliver me from this enemy! As to the old cripple, Hafiz, I have an account to square with him which I will take care of myself. Leila, you are costing me much!"

"If you will take my advice," said the chief, "it will be best for us both to strike at the same time. I will draw Abdallah away from home, never to return. You can take the bride. All will be done in two hours, and the enemy cut down before he even suspects his danger."

"So let it be," said Omar; "but remember that I wish never to see you again."

"That is natural," replied Kara Sheitan. "Tell me the day and the hour, give me five thousand duros, and depend upon my faithfulness. I have a reputation. I would not break my word for the finest horse in Arabia."

CHAPTER XXIV

HOSPITALITY

While avarice and hate were plotting together for Abdallah's death, the son of Yusuf was full of happiness, not dreaming that a cloud was gathering on his horizon. Could he whose heart was pure and whose soul was free from guile suspect an enemy? When one loves and is loved in return, does he not look upon all men as brothers? For the past month his heart had been full of joy, having no other thought than to cherish Leila and to thank God for having so blessed his house.

On one of those hot, close mornings which, in the desert, generally betoken a storm, Abdallah was resting in his garden under the shade of the citrons. Kafur, always seemingly careless, lay at his feet with her eyes fixed upon him, like a dog that waits for his master's command. At the back of the tent Halima was baking some loaves in the ashes. Leila, on her knees before an embroidery frame, was working a design in silk and gold upon her husband's burnoose. Surrounded by all that he loved, the son of Yusuf abandoned himself to the simple joy of

living. The barking of the dogs awoke him from his reverie. At the entrance to the garden a man had halted his camel and was stretching out his hand to the young Bedouin. Leila vanished; Abdallah arose to meet the stranger.

"Welcome," said he. "You bring us the blessing of God. This tent with all that it contains is yours. You are the master."

"Son of Yusuf," the stranger replied, "I will not set foot upon the ground until you have sworn to render me the service of which I stand in need."

"Speak," said the young man. "You are my guest. Your word is a command."

"I am a poor Syrian merchant," answered the stranger. "I have been to Mecca on some business. Yesterday I was drawn into a quarrel, in the holy city, with a Beni-Moteir, and had the misfortune to slay him. His family and his friends are pursuing me. I have no one in the desert to defend me, and if I cannot reach Medina, I am lost. You, alone, I am told, can conduct me thither in safety. My life is in your hands. Decide my fate."

"Come into my tent," said the son of Yusuf. "In an hour we will set forth."

"Remember," said the merchant, "that it is only to you that I will trust myself."

"I, alone, will go with you," replied Abdallah.

"I will be responsible for your safety with my own life."

As soon as the stranger had entered the tent and had been placed in the care of Halima, the young Bedouin went out to prepare for the journey. Kafur stopped him on the way.

"Do you know that man?" she asked.

"No; but what matter? God sent him that I might help him."

"He is not a merchant. I saw his pistols. They are too fine. He is a soldier. Beware."

"Soldier or merchant," replied Abdallah, "what have I to fear from a stranger and a fugitive? Prepare luncheon quickly. I have only time to tell Leila of the journey."

When the son of Yusuf returned to his guest, Kafur had placed before the pretended merchant a table upon which were spread biscuits, dates, boiled rice, honey, curds, and fresh cold water. While she was bustling about before the stranger, she kept looking at him and trying to remember where she had seen his face before. He showed the calmness and indifference of a man who did not know that he was being watched. In her anxiety Kafur determined to act quickly and disturb the calm which seemed to her to hide some danger. Like the quick-witted girl that she was, she seized an earthen vase,

and, standing behind the stranger, threw it upon the ground, breaking it into fragments. He turned quickly with an angry look in his eyes.

"The Arnaut!" she cried, looking at her master.

"Leave us," said Abdallah, "and do not annoy me with your foolishness."

Kafur glided into a corner of the tent and soon returned with a pot of hot tea. The stranger was perfectly calm. The word "Arnaut" had not disturbed him.

"My guest," said Abdallah, "welcome to this poor table. The journey will be long. It is well to prepare yourself against fatigue. Eat and be filled."

"Excuse me," replied the stranger. "Anxiety and fear have given me a fever. I have only one wish; that is, to begin our journey."

"Salt is good for the appetite," said Kafur, and taking a handful, she thrust it into the stranger's mouth, and then ran out into the garden.

"Unmannerly girl!" cried the son of Yusuf. "I will punish your impudence!" and he dashed out after Kafur.

"Beat me, if you will," said Kafur, between her sobs. "Whip the dog that warns you, and pat the jackal that would eat you up. Did you not hear the dogs howl this morning? They saw Azrael, the death angel. You are mad. Death is over this tent. Do you not recognize this merchant?"

"Never suspect a guest," said Abdallah, interrupting her. Then returning to the tent, he found the stranger seated in the same spot in which he had left him, with a smile upon his lips.

"I think," said he, "that your slave has given me a lesson in good manners. The life of a guest is always in the hand of his host. I will try to do justice to your hospitality."

He began to eat with a very good appetite for a sick man, talking all the while, and trying in every way to make himself agreeable to Abdallah.

Just as they departed, and when the stranger was already on his camel, Leila came out, her face half concealed in her burnoose, and holding in her hand a jug of water from which she poured a little upon the camel's flanks and over his feet.

"May God grant you a pleasant journey," she said to the stranger, "and may he lead you to those who love you and who await your coming."

"Those who love me are all dead," replied the stranger; "and since I lost my mother twenty years ago, no one has ever watched for me."

"Then may God give you a wife who will love you and grow old with you."

"Let us go," said the stranger, abruptly. "The moments are numbered."

"My lord," said Leila to her husband, "you

carry happiness away with you. May you soon come back with it !”

Kafur was at Abdallah's side. “Master,” she said, “are you not going to take your gun?”

“No ; that would be an insult to the man with whom I travel. Fear not. He whom God protects is well protected. When my uncle comes back from the field, ask him to take charge of the tent. After God, it is to his care that I intrust you.”

So saying, Abdallah took his spear in his hand and set out, on foot, walking beside the stranger's camel. Halima and Leila watched the two travelers as long as they were in sight ; then they returned to the tent. Kafur alone remained outside, still watching with a trembling heart. It seemed every minute as if the horizon were going to lift, and the desert send back the master for whom she waited. Vain hope of an anxious soul ! Night closed over the earth, but Abdallah did not return.

CHAPTER XXV

THE GOLDEN LEAF

As soon as they had plunged into the desert the stranger looked around him to make sure that they were alone. Then he put his hand to his sash and felt of the handle of one of his pistols.

"I hope, my dear guest," said Abdallah, "that you will overlook the prank of that child who disturbed you."

"If she had been my slave," replied the traveler, "I should have punished her severely."

"We should be indulgent to those who love us. Kafur believed that great danger threatened me. It was to save me from this imaginary peril that she unintentionally offended you. By forcing you to eat my salt she has made us friends for life and for death. Among you Syrians, is this not true?"

"With my tribe the obligation lasts only for a day. If the second day passes without our eating from the same dish, the salt has lost its power; we are then free to hate each other."

"Well, my guest," said Abdallah, with a smile, "you may hate me to-morrow. Until then, you are

my friend. It is your duty to take my part against all men."

"So I will," replied the traveler, and then was silent. "These are strange words," he thought. "The Bedouin is right. I cannot kill him the same day that I have eaten the salt of hospitality. That would be a crime. We will wait until night. When the sun has set, another day will begin. Then I shall have the right to do as I wish."

As they journeyed on he kept looking at Abdallah, who walked erect with head up and brow untroubled. The Bedouin was not armed, and although he carried a lance in his hand, it was only to assist him in walking through the loose sand.

"The man's confidence annoys me," said the stranger to himself. "Five thousand duros for such a job is not enough. I would rather kill that dog of an Omar for half the price."

When the sun was about to set the stranger urged forward the camel in order to examine his pistols, without attracting Abdallah's notice, and to see if they were in order. Then holding them under his burnoose, he paused, saying to himself, "The time has come."

As he turned, the son of Yusuf came up to him, took hold of the camel's bridle, and, thrusting his lance into the ground, spread two prayer rugs on the sand.

"My brother," he said to the stranger, "this is the hour of prayer. The kiblah¹ is before us, and if we have no water for our ablutions, you know that we are allowed to use the sand of the desert instead."

"Let us not lose time," cried the stranger. "I cannot stop."

"Are you not a Mussulman?" asked Abdallah, looking at him threateningly.

"There is no god but God, and Mohammed is his prophet," the stranger hastened to reply; "but the religion of a poor pilgrim like me is simpler than that of a noble Bedouin. I do not pray, because whatever God does is right; I do not perform ablutions, because water, in the desert, is needed for drink; I do not give alms, because I have to ask them instead; I do not make any special fast in the month of Ramadan,² because I am half dead with hunger all the year round; and I do not go on pilgrimages, because the whole world is God's temple. This is my faith. Ill luck to him who is so particular as to be offended by it."

"You surprise me, my guest," said the son of Yusuf. "I had a very different opinion of you. Do you not carry upon your arm an amulet, as I do,

¹ *Kiblah*: the direction of Mecca; the point toward which Mohammedans turn their faces in prayer.

² *Ramadan*: the ninth month of the Mohammedan year, in which Mohammed is said to have had his first revelation.

which wards off the temptations of the Evil One? And do you not know that it contains the two saving chapters?"

"Yes, I carry a charm," replied the traveler. "My mother gave it to me, on her deathbed, twenty years ago. It is the only thing that I care for. More than once it has turned aside the death that was hovering about me."

"Have you forgotten the words which give this amulet its power?"

"I have never troubled myself to inquire what they are," replied the stranger. "My mother chose them for me. She knew them; I do not."

"Hear them, then," said Abdallah, solemnly. "When one lives in the midst of this ocean of sand, in which a breath may overwhelm him, it is good to draw near to Him who alone can protect."

And turning toward Mecca, the son of Yusuf repeated, with deep emotion, the following chapter of the Koran¹:

DAYBREAK

"In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful;
Say, I fly for refuge unto the Lord of the DAYBREAK,
That he may deliver me from the mischief of his creation,
From the mischief of the night when it cometh on,
From the mischief of the enchantress,
From the mischief of the envious, when he envieth."

¹ Koran, cxiii.

"Peace be with you," said the stranger. "Are those the words which my mother left me?" And as he listened, he put back the pistols into his girdle.

The son of Yusuf continued to recite from the Koran :

MEN

"In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful ;
Say, I fly for refuge unto the Lord of MEN,
The King of men,
The God of men,
That he may deliver me from the mischief of the stealthily
 withdrawing whisperer
Who whispereth evil into the hearts of men,
Against genii and men."

"Who said that?" asked the stranger. "Who thus reads the heart?"

"God made the heart," cried Abdallah. "We are his children. If he wishes death for us, our feet lead us to where death is waiting ; if he wishes safety, death falls before us like a stricken lion. He saved Abraham out of the flames ; he drew Jonah out of the depths of the sea."

"Do you never fear death, then?" asked the stranger.

"No," replied Abdallah. "What God wills, nothing can prevent. In the life of man there are two occasions when it is foolish to defend ourselves :

one is the day when God orders death to smite us ; the other when he forbids it to approach."

"Does not one always fear that unknown hour which is to be the end of life ? " asked the stranger.

"No," said the son of Yusuf ; "not if he has followed God's word. Your mother, I doubt not, repeated to you more than once the same saying that my mother told to me : ' On the day when you were born, all around you rejoiced, while you, alone, wept. So live that when your hour comes to die, all whom you know shall weep, while you alone shall have no tears to shed. Fear not death, whatever be the hour of its coming.' "

"You dwellers in the desert are a strange people," said the stranger, as he again mechanically put his hand upon one of his pistols.

"We are the people of the Prophet," replied the Bedouin. "We follow his teachings. Before you set foot under my tent," he added, raising his voice, "I knew you, Kara Sheitan. You are my enemy. You have come to me under a false name. I do not know the object of your journey, and nothing would have been easier than for me to get rid of you. But you have asked my hospitality, and God has placed you under my protection. That is why I have gone with you alone and unarmed. If you have evil designs upon me, may God forgive you."

"I will not touch a hair of the man who has saved me," cried Kara Sheitan. "Here is my hand. It is the hand of a soldier who returns evil for evil and good for good."

The chief had no sooner spoken these words than he regretted them. "This Bedouin has played with me as if I were a child," he thought. "Shall I give back the five thousand duros? No. Omar is rich enough to pay his brother's debt. Besides, have I not taken Abdallah out of the way? If the merchant's courage has not failed him, Leila is already on the way to Jedda. If he wishes to complain, let him come for his duros. I have promised to kill some one; I will give him the preference." At this happy thought Kara Sheitan laughed quietly, and congratulated himself upon his shrewdness.

An instant afterwards remorse took possession of him. "It is strange," he said to himself; "I am yielding to an unnatural impulse. Who will ask my aid after this? Am I nothing but an old lion who has lost his teeth and his claws? That young woman who spoke to me so sweetly, this Bedouin who puts himself in my hands, my mother's voice which seems to come out of the tomb, — all this is magic! Curse the amulet! It is that which has undone me." And he snatched the trinket from his arm.

"Chief," said Abdallah, "we must plunge into

the desert if you do not wish to meet that caravan which you see approaching in the distance. It is on its way to Medina."

"No," replied Kara Sheitan. "On the contrary, I am going to join it. I have no further need of you now. What shall I give you to show my gratitude for your aid? Here, take this amulet. You do not know how much you owe to it, nor how much it has cost me. Farewell. If any one says, in your hearing, that I am a coward, do not forget that I have been your guest and your friend."

And urging forward his camel, he rode off at a rapid pace, leaving Abdallah surprised at the strange words, the meaning of which he could not then understand.

When alone, the son of Yusuf looked carefully at the protecting amulet. It was a little roll of parchment bound about with a silk string. To one end of it had been sewed a piece of velvet on which was fastened a bit of gold. Abdallah uttered a cry of joy. He could not be mistaken. It was the third leaf of the four-leaved clover. He now had nothing further to seek on earth. The diamond leaf awaited him in heaven.

With a heart full of gratitude Abdallah threw himself down, with his face in the sand, and, in a voice trembling with emotion, recited the Fatihah :

"In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful,
Praise be to God, Lord of the Universe ;
The Compassionate, the Merciful !
King of the day of judgment !
Thee only do we worship, and to thee do we cry for help.
Guide thou us in the right path,
The path of those to whom thou art gracious ;
Not of those with whom thou art angered, nor of those who
go astray."

The prayer finished, Abdallah turned homeward, with a happy heart and a light step. A new thought had taken possession of him, a thought which was in itself happiness. Was it certain that the diamond leaf had fallen within the gates of paradise? Did not these three leaves, brought together once more from the far corners of the earth, call out for their sister leaf? Could a blessing of God remain incomplete? Why might not a new effort, a more whole-souled devotion to the divine will gain the great prize for which Abdallah longed?

Stimulated by this hope, the son of Yusuf went on, unconscious of the length and weariness of the journey, until at length night forced him to stop. It was very dark, and there was no moon until nearly morning. Wrapped in his burnoose, he threw himself down and fell asleep. His new thought did not leave him. In his dreams the blessed four-leaved clover was always before him, but it expanded and

took on human shapes. It was Leila, it was Hafiz, it was Halima, it was poor Kafur. These four joined hands and together seemed to make up the mysterious plant, as they surrounded Abdallah with their smiles and love.

“To-morrow, my beloved !” murmured the young man. “To-morrow !”

But, as the Koran says : “God has reserved the knowledge of the hour of death. No one knoweth what to-morrow shall bring forth ; no one knoweth in what corner of the earth he shall die. Yet God knoweth. He knoweth all.”

CHAPTER XXVI

THE RETURN

When the son of Yusuf awoke, the moonlight was shining softly over the sand, but already the morning breeze had sprung up. The impatient traveler pressed on, and at the break of day, as he reached the summit of a slight elevation, he could see in the distance the tents of his tribe. In front of them and nearer at hand was his own dwelling.

At the sight of his people Abdallah paused to take breath and to enjoy the scene before him. After the stillness of the night the first sounds of the morning smote sharply on his ear. Several women, carrying jars on their heads, were already on their way to the well to draw water ; the camels were stretching their long necks and bellowing ; the sheep, still in the fold, were bleating for the shepherd. About the tent of Abdallah all was silent. In the garden there was no sound, no movement.

" My uncle is getting old," thought Abdallah ; " I am needed at home. And what joy to surprise them all ! Who would have thought that a day's absence would seem so long ? "

As he descended the slope a horse overtook him, returning to the tents at full gallop. It was Hamama. He called to her, but the frightened mare kept on. For the first time since she was a colt she did not heed her master's call.

"Who can have untied Hamama?" asked Abdallah of himself. "What has frightened her so? It must be some new prank of Kafur's. How has it happened that they have not kept a more careful watch?"

The garden gate was open. He entered. At the sound of his footsteps the dogs came out of the tent, but instead of running to meet him, they began to howl dismally.

"God is great!" cried the son of Yusuf. "Misfortune has entered my dwelling."

At that moment he felt the bitterness of death. He tried to go forward, but his knees bent beneath him. A cloud seemed to pass over his eyes. He tried to call, but his voice failed him. Finally, making a mighty effort, he cried out: "Uncle! Mother! Leila! Kafur! Where are you?"

There was no reply. The doves cooed in the tree tops, the bees hummed about the late flowers, the water murmured over the pebbles; nature was alive in the garden, but the tent was still and dead. He dragged himself on, holding to the bushes for

support. Then his strength returned and the blood surged to his temples. He plunged into the tent.

No one was there. The furniture was overturned ; the table was broken. There had evidently been a struggle. The curtain which separated the women's apartment was torn down. He entered, and as he did so, stumbled over a body. It was Hafiz.

The old man's hands were tightly clenched. In the left was grasped a shred of blue cotton cloth, — a piece of Leila's gown.

Abdallah knelt down. "God have mercy upon you," he murmured. "May he be good to you, as you were good to us."

He arose without a tear and, going out, walked with a firm step toward the village. But before he reached it his strength again failed him and he leaned against the trunk of a palm tree for support. Drawing his two pistols from his girdle, he discharged them as a signal for assistance.

At the sound the Bedouins, both men and women, rushed thither from all sides and formed a circle about the chief, who still leaned against the tree, pale and trembling, with frenzy in his eyes.

"Here you are!" he cried. "Brave men! Beni-Amer! Kings of the desert! No! Faint-hearted cowards!" And for the first time he wept.

A cry of anger went up from the crowd. "He is

mad," said one of the old men. "Have respect for him whose reason God has taken away. Come, my son," he added, taking Abdallah's hand; "calm yourself, and tell us what is the matter."

"What is the matter!" cried Abdallah. "Last night, while I was away, Hafiz was killed, my wife and mother were carried off, all that I loved was taken from me! And you — you were asleep — you heard nothing! Shame upon you! To me is woe; to you disgrace and infamy!"

At Abdallah's first words the women had rushed to the tent, where they were now heard weeping and wailing. The old man hung down his head.

"Who would have thought of watching over your family," he asked, "when your uncle and your brother were there?"

"My brother!" exclaimed Abdallah. "It is impossible!"

"Last night," said one of the Bedouins, "your brother came with six slaves. I well remembered the little merchant, and I helped old Hafiz kill a sheep for his guest's supper."

The son of Yusuf hid his face in his hands. Then he looked at his companions and said in a faint voice, "See what my brother has done and give me counsel."

"That is easy to do," said one of them. "After injury, revenge! You are a finger of our hand. He

who touches you strikes at us ; he who seeks your life seeks ours. Omar has several hours the start of us, but before evening we shall overtake and kill him. Come, my brave men," he added, turning to the Bedouins, "saddle your horses and take a double supply of water, for the day is hot and the skins dry fast. Make haste !"

Before mounting his horse, Abdallah wished to see his uncle's face once more. Already the women had surrounded the body and were weeping.

"O my father, my best friend," murmured the Bedouin, "thou knowest why I leave thee. I will never again enter this dwelling until thou art avenged !"

The Beni-Amer had followed the son of Yusuf. One of the old men gazed long at Hafiz. Then raising his hand, he said solemnly : "Accursed be he among you who returns to his wife until he has stricken down our enemy ! Woe to him who has insulted us ! Before night we shall cast his body to the eagles and the jackals, and all men shall know whether the Beni-Amer are brethren who protect each other, or children with whom any one may play."

CHAPTER XXVII

LEILA

It was amid cries and shouts of vengeance that the little company set forth; but once in the desert all were silent, each man getting ready his weapons and watching closely the horizon. To follow the retreating band was not difficult, for the wind had not yet effaced the marks of the camels' feet, all of which were directed toward Jedda. Abdallah, always in advance, counted the minutes, but as far as he could see, by straining his eyes, there was nothing but desolation. The air was hot; the sky was overcast and thick with an approaching storm. The horses panted and, reeking with sweat, made slow progress. The son of Yusuf sighed; vengeance seemed to be escaping him.

But at last he perceived a black speck on the horizon. It was Omar's company. They had felt the approach of the storm and had taken refuge among the Red Rocks, which Abdallah knew so well.

"Friends," he cried, "we have them! There they are. God has delivered them into our hands.

Press on!" And each man, forgetful of fatigue, urged on his horse to overtake the brigands.

In those endless plains it is not easy to surprise an enemy who is on his guard. Omar soon recognized his pursuers, and did not wait. He arranged his camels in line and placed several drivers behind them to give the impression of a defense and to delay the Beni-Amer. Then he mounted his horse and, with the rest of the band, fled into the desert.

The Bedouins came up. At the first volley Omar's camel drivers fled among the rocks. The smoke had hardly cleared away when a woman rushed toward Abdallah. It was Halima, whom they had left behind and who was now free.

"God bless you, my son!" she cried. "But do not stop. Follow that negro with the red burnoose. He is the murderer of Hafiz, the kidnaper of Leila. Avenge us! Eye for eye; tooth for tooth; life for life! Death to traitors!"

At these words Hamama, as if she shared her master's anger, dashed over the sands with the swiftness of a mountain torrent. The other Bedouins could scarcely keep Abdallah in sight. For his part, rage made him unconscious of danger.

"Cowards!" he cried to Omar's companions, as he overtook them. "Where can you flee, when God directs your pursuers?" And raising his sword,

he passed unharmed through a shower of bullets, keeping his eye fixed upon the negro who carried Leila, and pursuing him so swiftly that the rest of the party were soon left far behind. The negro, mounted upon a fleet horse, sped like an arrow over the desert. Abdallah followed close. Hamama was gaining ground. Vengeance was at hand.

Leila, placed in front of the negro on the saddle, and held by one of his powerful arms, called to her husband. She struggled to free herself, but in vain. Then, all at once, she seized the bridle and gave it a quick jerk, which brought the horse to a stop.

"A curse upon you!" cried the negro. "Let go the bridle!"

"Help! my beloved!" called Leila to Abdallah, still clinging to the bridle, in spite of threats and blows, with all the force of despair.

The son of Yusuf fell like lightning upon the bandit, when suddenly Hamama, frightened, sprang aside with a great bound which would have thrown from the saddle any other rider than her master. Leila had fallen at her feet, and Abdallah heard a groan which pierced his heart. Without a thought of the escaping enemy he leaped to the ground. He lifted up his prostrate wife, pale and bleeding, with a deep wound in her throat.

"Leila, my love, speak to me!" cried the son of

Yusuf, as he tried to stanch the wound from which her lifeblood was flowing. But Leila no longer heard him.

When the Beni-Amer rejoined the son of Yusuf they found him in the same attitude, motionless, holding his wife in his arms and gazing into the upturned face, which seemed to smile at him. They stood around him in silence, and accustomed as they were to the sight of death, tears stood in the eyes of more than one.

When Halima saw what had happened she uttered a cry and threw her arms about the neck of her son. Then suddenly rising, "Are we avenged?" she asked. "Is Omar dead? Is the negro slain?"

"See those crows yonder," said one of the Bedouins. "There lies the murderer of Hafiz and Leila. Omar has escaped us, but the simoon¹ is rising. He will not be able to get out of the desert, and within an hour the sand will be his shroud."

"My son," said Halima, "press on! Our enemy is still alive. Leave tears to women. We will bury the dead. Do you strike down the traitor, and God be with you!"

These words put new life into Abdallah. "God is great!" he cried. "You are right, my mother. Tears for you; vengeance for me!"

¹ *Simoon* or *simoom*: the fierce sand storm of the desert.

He arose and placed Leila in his mother's arms, looking at the pale face with infinite tenderness. "Peace be unto thee, soul of my soul," he said slowly and sadly. "Peace be unto thee, who art now in the presence of the Lord. Receive the blessings which have been promised thee. It is God who lifts us up; it is God who casts us down. God giveth both life and death. And we, too, if it be God's will, shall soon be with you."

He raised his hands toward heaven, murmured the *Fatihah*, and, passing his hand over his brow, embraced his mother; then, turning, leaped upon his horse.

"Where are you going?" cried one of the Bedouins. "Do you not see that fiery cloud rolling up yonder? We have barely time to gain the shelter of the Red Rocks. Death is in the desert!"

"Farewell," replied Abdallah. "There is no longer any rest for me but in the shadow of death."

CHAPTER XXVIII

VENGEANCE

The storm was approaching ; the sky was milky white ; the rayless sun hung in the heavens like a glowing millstone ; a hot and poisonous breeze dried up the moisture of the throat and seemed to melt the very marrow of the bones. In the distance could be heard a sound like the roaring of an angry sea. Clouds of red sand rose from the ground and mounted in whirling columns to the sky. Everywhere was desolation, everywhere a burning heat, and at times a silence even more frightful than the moaning of the storm.

Over this burning plain of death Hamama advanced slowly with panting breast and quivering flanks. Her master showed that calmness which knows neither fear nor hope. He did not feel heat or thirst. One thought alone took possession of body and soul, — to overtake the traitor and to kill him.

After an hour's journey he saw a horse stretched out on the sand. From a little farther beyond came a sound somewhat like a sigh. He approached. A man lay in the dust, dying with thirst, and without the strength to utter a cry. It was the son of Mansur.

His eyes seemed starting from their sockets, his mouth was open, and his hands clutched at his heaving breast. Mad with suffering, he did not recognize Abdallah. All that he could do was to put his hand to his parched throat.

"Yes, you shall have water," said Abdallah. "It is not thus that you shall die."

He dismounted from his horse, took a skin of water from the saddlebow, and when he had thrown away Omar's pistols and saber, he held the skin to the lips of the dying man. Omar took a long draft. The water restored him to life, and he found himself face to face with Abdallah.

"It is you who have saved me," he murmured. "I know your inexhaustible kindness. You are a brother to those who have no brothers. You are like the blessed dew to the thirsty soul."

"Son of Mansur," said the young man, "you must die."

"Have mercy, my brother!" cried the merchant, who fully recovered at the consciousness of danger. "You have not saved my life in order to put me to death. Have mercy, in the name of all that you hold dearest on earth! Have mercy, for the sake of her who nourished us both in infancy!"

"Halima curses you," replied Abdallah. "You must die."



"Have mercy, my brother"

Alarmed at the sinister air of the Bedouin, Omar threw himself upon his knees. "My brother," he cried, "I know what a crime I have committed. I have deserved your wrath. But though my offense be great, can I not redeem it? Will you not take my fortune? Will you not consent to be the richest man in Arabia?"

"You have killed Hafiz," said Abdallah. "You have killed Leila. You must die."

"Is Leila dead?" cried Omar, bursting into tears. "That cannot be! Let her blood be upon the head of her murderer. I am not to blame. Spare me, Abdallah! Have pity on me!"

"It were as well to implore the gates of the tomb," replied the son of Yusuf. "May God give you courage," he added, drawing his saber, "to endure the punishment which he sends you."

"At least, my brother," said Omar, in an agitated voice, "let me repeat a prayer. You would not have the angel of death take me before I have besought God's mercy."

"Repeat your prayer," replied Abdallah.

The merchant unwound his turban and spread it out before him. Then he bared his shoulders, and bowed his head for the fatal stroke, saying meanwhile: "'God is great. There is no strength nor power but in God. To him we belong; to him we

must return. O Lord of the Day of Judgment, deliver me from the punishment of the condemned. Have mercy upon me! ’ ’

Tears came into Abdallah’s eyes as he listened. “It must be done,” he said to himself. “It must be done.” Yet his heart softened. This wretch was his brother. He had loved him. He loved him still. When love has once entered into the soul, it is like a spearhead in the flesh ; it may be torn out, but the marks of it always remain. In vain the son of Yusuf sought to steel his heart by calling to mind the image of his murdered uncle, of his dying wife. What appeared to him instead, and in spite of himself, was the picture of their happy childhood, — Halima clasping both children to her breast, Hafiz taking them on his knees while he told them stories of the wars. The joys they had shared, the sorrows they had had in common, — all these sweet memories came out of the past to protect the son of Mansur. Strange inconsistency ! The victims themselves appeared, asking the executioner to stay his hand. “He is your brother, and he is defenseless,” said the old Bedouin. “He is your brother,” said Leila, with tears in her eyes ; “do not kill him.”

“No, no,” murmured the young man, thrusting aside these fond phantoms. “It must be done. When crime has been committed, justice is the will of God.”

Notwithstanding the disturbed condition of Omar's mind, the hesitation of Abdallah did not escape his notice. With tears streaming from his eyes he clasped the knees of his judge.

"O my brother," he said, "do not add your sin to mine. Remember what Abel said to his brother when threatened with death: 'If thou stretchest forth thy hand against me to slay me, I will not stretch forth mine against thee, for I fear God, the Lord of all creatures.'¹ Alas, my sin has been greater than that of Cain. You have the right to slay me, but my life is too insignificant to atone for the crime to which my passions led me. God, who forgives an injury, loves those who imitate him. He has promised forgiveness to those who turn to him. Let me repent! He has promised an inheritance as wide as heaven and earth to those who restrain their wrath. Spare me, in order that God may show you mercy, for God loveth the good."²

"Rise," said Abdallah. "These words have saved you. Vengeance belongs to God. Let him be your judge. I will not dip my hand in the blood of him whom my mother nursed."

"Will you leave me here?" asked Omar, looking about him with an anxious glance. "That would be more cruel than to kill me."

¹ Koran, v, 31.

² Koran, iii, 117-150.

In answer, Abdallah simply pointed to Hamama. Omar leaped upon her back, and, without turning his head, plunged the spurs into her sides and disappeared.

"Now," he said to himself as he dashed through the clouds of sand which were rising around him, "if I escape the storm, I shall be saved from the peril which was foretold concerning me." But he thought not of Abdallah, whom he had left behind.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE DIAMOND LEAF

The wicked, when he has been successful, laughs in his heart and says: "I am shrewd. Shrewdness is the greatest thing in the world." The good, whether successful or defeated, is resigned, and lifting his hands to heaven says: "Lord, thou directest whom thou wilt, and thou causest to stumble whom thou wilt. Thou art all-powerful and all-wise. What thou doest is well done."¹

Abdallah retraced his way homeward with profound sadness. His heart was sorely troubled; he had driven out its wrath, but he could not allay its grief. Great tears rolled down his cheeks. He tried in vain to stop them. "Forgive me, Lord," he said. "Have pity on the weakness of a heart that cannot be resigned. The Prophet hath said, 'The eyes were made for tears and the flesh for affliction.' Glory to him who holdeth in his hands dominion over all things! May he give me strength to endure what he has willed."

¹ Koran, xiv, 3.

Thus praying, he walked on through the midst of the whirling, burning sand. Weariness and heat at last forced him to stop. The blood had turned to fire in his veins. A strange disorder seized his brain. He was no longer master either of his senses or his thoughts. Consumed by parching thirst, there were moments when both sight and hearing left him. Then he seemed to see in the distance gardens beautiful with shade trees and pools fringed with flowers; the wind sighed through the trees; a spring gushed out of the grass. Refreshed by this sight, Abdallah dragged himself toward the enchanted stream. Cruel delusion! Gardens, gushing waters, — all these delights vanished as he approached them. Nothing was to be seen about him but the burning sand. Bewildered and gasping for breath, he felt that his last hour had come. "There is no God but God," he cried, "and Mohammed is his prophet. It is written that I shall go no farther. Lord, come to my aid. Remove from me the horrors of death."

He knelt down, washed his face and hands in the sand of the desert, and then with his saber began to dig a grave.

As he was removing the sand, it seemed to him, all at once, that the storm vanished, leaving a clear sky. The horizon was lighted up with a glow softer

than the dawn, and the clouds opened slowly like the folds of a tent. Was this a new mirage? Who can tell? Abdallah was mute with wonder and delight.

Before him stretched an immense garden watered by brooks which wound rippling through it in all directions. Trees with trunks of gold, leaves of emerald, fruits of topaz and ruby, shaded with their glistening foliage lawns which were enameled with unheard-of flowers. Beautiful youths, clad in jeweled garments, drank together from silver chalices the water of celestial fountains, — that water, clearer than crystal and sweeter than honey, which quencheth all thirst forever. There, too, were lovely girls, with large dark eyes and modest mien. Transparent as the light, their beauty filled both eyes and heart; their faces shone with a radiance softer than that of the moon peering through the clouds. In this realm of joy and peace the happy youths and maidens talked and smiled, while a circle of beautiful children surrounded them like a necklace of pearls, each holding in his hands a vase clearer and more sparkling than crystal and pouring out of it the blessed water of life.

In the distance was heard the angel Israfel, the sweetest singer among all God's creatures; the houris joined their melodious voices with the angel's song; even the trees rustled their vocal leaves and

united, praising God, in a harmony grander than anything that man has ever dreamed.

While Abdallah marveled in silence at this wonderful vision an angel came down to him. It was not the terrible Azrael, but the messenger of heavenly grace, the good and blessed Gabriel. He held in his hand a little diamond leaf, but, little though it was, the light which shone from it lighted up the whole desert.

Intoxicated with joy, the son of Yusuf ran to meet the angel. Then he stopped in terror. At his feet yawned an immense chasm. To cross this gulf which separated earth and heaven there was only a great arch made of a blade of steel finer than a hair and sharper than the edge of a sword.

Though seized with despair, he felt himself sustained and urged forward by invisible hands. Hafiz and Leila were on either side of him. He could not see them ; he dared not turn for fear of waking ; but he felt their presence ; he heard their soft voices. Both of them supported him and carried him with them. "In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful !" he cried. At these words, which are the key of heaven, he passed over to the other side as the lightning and the wind pass.

The angel was there, holding out to him the mysterious leaf. The young man seized it. At last

the four-leaved clover was his, the veil of the body was rent, the hour of reward had sounded. Gabriel turned his eyes toward the end of the garden, where stood the throne of God. Abdallah's gaze followed that of the angel, and the light of the divine glory shone full in his face. At this sight, which no eye can endure, he fell with his face to the ground, uttering a great cry of joy.

This cry the ear of man has never heard, the voice of man has never repeated. The mad delight of the shipwrecked sailor who escapes the wrath of the sea, the rapture with which the bridegroom clasps for the first time his beloved to his heart, the transports of the mother who finds her boy whom she has mourned as lost, all the joys of earth, are but as mourning and sorrow to the cry of joy which rose from the soul of Abdallah.

At this sound, reëchoed afar, the earth took on once more the beauty of its days of innocence and blossomed with the flowers of paradise ; the sky, bluer than sapphire, seemed to smile upon the land ; then silence fell on all things ; night came on, and the storm again assumed dominion over the desert.

CHAPTER XXX

THE HAPPINESS OF OMAR

On reëntering his house in Jedda the son of Mansur felt the relief of a condemned man who has escaped his punishment. He shut himself up for a time to regain his composure ; he looked again at his riches ; he felt of his gold. That was his life ! That was his power ! Did not his wealth give him the means to subjugate men and the right to despise them ?

Yet Omar could not find happiness in these things as of old. There was more than one danger on his horizon. If Abdallah succeeded in returning home, might he not regret his generosity ? If he died in the desert, might he not leave behind him an avenger ? Might not the shereef take offense at what had been done ? Might not the pasha set too high a price upon his protection ? The son of Mansur tried to drive out of his mind these troublesome thoughts. "Why should I be afraid," he asked himself, "when the gravest danger is past, — thanks to my cleverness ? Am I at the end of my resources ? My worst enemies

have fallen ; shall I not be able finally to buy off the rest ? Life is a treasure which is continually growing less ; therefore it is folly to waste any of it in vain anxieties ! What a difficult thing it is, after all, to be perfectly happy ! ”

To his not unreasonable fears were added other terrors which Omar could not understand. In spite of himself he thought of old Hafiz whom he had slain. He could not banish the memory of Leila, nor the image of his brother dying in the desert, the victim of a generous sacrifice.

“ These are foolish imaginings,” he said, “ that whiten one’s hair before its time. How weak it is to think of such things ! Can I alter fate ? If old Hafiz is no longer alive, it is because his time had come. And as to Abdallah, from the day of his birth his death was written in God’s book. Why, then, should it trouble me ? Am I not rich ? I have bought the consciences of other people ; I will buy repose for my own heart.”

It was in vain. His soul was like the restless sea, which, unable to quiet its waves, casts upon the beach foam and mire. “ I need only a little time to set me right,” he thought. “ The discomfort which I feel is only the remains of my fright and anxiety. Fools call this remorse, but it is only a little fatigue and fever. I know what will cure me ! I have there in my closet

a wine of Shiraz¹ which has comforted me more than once. I will find in it peace and forgetfulness ! ”

He went into his harem and called a Persian slave whose voice was soft and beautiful, and who was not shocked at the use of the wine cup, for she could pour out with fiendish grace this poison held accursed by all true Mussulmans.

“ How pale you are, master ! ” said she, noticing Omar’s drawn face.

“ It is the fatigue of my long journey,” replied Omar. “ Pour me some wine and sing me one of those songs of your country which drive away weariness and bring back mirth.”

The slave brought two cups of crystal, ornamented with gold ; she poured out the liquor, clear and yellow as amber ; then taking a tambourine, struck it, now with her hand, now with her elbow, then shook it above her head, singing meanwhile one of those dainty odes of the Persian poet Hafiz, “ The Nightingale of Shiraz ” :

“ Pass round the cup, sweet child, pass round the cup,
And fill it to the brim with sparkling wine ;
The myriad woes which fill life’s measure up
Are rendered harmless by this juice divine.”

¹ *Shiraz* : a Persian city famous for its wines and its luxurious gardens as well as for its poets and scholars. It was the home of Hafiz, the greatest of the lyric poets of Persia.

"Pour me out forgetfulness," cried the son of Mansur. "I know not what it is that troubles me to-day. This wine makes me sad instead of cheering me. Strike your tambourine more loudly ; sing more gayly, make more noise ; intoxicate me !"

The beautiful Persian continued her song in a stronger voice, rattling the tambourine until it fairly snarled :

"But age with waning voice now whispers low,
'Hafiz, thou squanderest life' " —

"Curses on you !" cried Omar, leaping up with a threatening gesture, while the slave fled in fright. "What name do you speak ? Cannot the dead rest in their graves ? Must they come to spoil my life ? I have freed myself from my enemies. Shall I now be disturbed by ghosts ? Avaunt, ye visions ! I will forget ! In spite of everything, I will be happy ! I will laugh !"

As he said this, he stopped, — then uttered a cry of terror. Kafur stood before him.

"Where do you come from, child of Eblis ? Why are you in my house ?" he demanded, as soon as he could find words.

"That I should like to know," replied the child. "It was not by my choice that your servants carried me into your harem."

"Go, then. I do not wish to see you."

"I will not go," replied Kafur, "until you have given me back my mistress. I belong to Leila. I would serve her."

"Your mistress has no further need of you."

"Why?" asked the negress.

"Why?" repeated the son of Mansur in an unsteady voice. "You will soon know. Leila is in the desert. Go and find her."

"No," said Kafur. "I will stay here then, and wait for Abdallah."

"Abdallah is not here."

"He must be," cried the child; "I have seen his horse."

"My servants brought away the horse when they brought you."

"No," replied the negress; "when your servants seized me, I had already set Hamama free. She was more fortunate than I, and escaped. If the horse is here, Abdallah ought to be here; if he is not here, what have you done with him?"

"Away! impudent girl!" cried the son of Mansur. "Ask me no questions. Only fear my wrath! I can have you beaten to death." As he said this, his eyes glittered like those of a madman.

"Why threaten me?" said Kafur in a milder tone. "Although I am only a slave, perhaps I can be of

use to you. Master, you are troubled. I see it in your face. This trouble I can drive away. In my country we have spells to cure the mind. If sorrow, or even remorse, is in your soul, I can draw it out as the bezoar¹ stone draws the poison from a wound."

"Do you, child, pretend to have such power?" asked Omar ironically, with a sharp glance at Kafur, who looked back at him, unmoved. "Why not?" he added. "These negroes of the Maghreb are all children of Satan, and they know their father's secrets. Well, yes, I have a sorrow. Cure me, and I will pay you well."

"Is there hashish in the house? Let me make you a drink of it. It will give you peace and joy."

"Make what you will," said Omar. "You are a slave. You know that I am rich and generous. I have faith in you. At any price, I must enjoy life."

Kafur soon found some hashish leaves and began to prepare them, while the son of Mansur watched her with an eager eye. She first washed the leaves three times, and rubbed them between her hands, repeating meanwhile certain mysterious words. Then she beat them in a copper mortar and mixed them with milk and spices.

¹ *Bezoar*: a calcareous stone found in the digestive tracts of certain animals and supposed in Eastern countries to be an antidote for poison.

"That is the cup of forgetfulness," she said. "Drink it and do not fear."

As soon as Omar had drunk, his head seemed to grow light, his eyes dilated, his senses became strangely acute, yet, — strangest of all, — Kafur's will seemed to become his own. If she sang, he repeated the song; if she laughed, he shouted with merriment; if she was serious, he wept; if she became threatening, he trembled.

As soon as Kafur saw that he was in her power, she set to work to wrest from him his secret.

"Now you are satisfied," she said, forcing a smile. "You have avenged yourself upon your enemies."

"Well satisfied," replied Omar, laughing. "I am avenged. The charming Leila will no longer love her Bedouin."

"She is dead?" asked Kafur, with a trembling voice.

"She is dead," said Omar, and burst into tears. "It was not I who killed her. It was the negro. Poor woman! She would have been so happy in my harem."

"And you no longer fear Abdallah?" inquired Kafur.

"No; I do not fear him. I have taken his horse. I have left him in the depths of the desert, alone and in the grasp of the simoon. He will not leave it."

"Lost in the sands! Dead, perhaps!" cried Kafur, tearing her garments.

"What could you expect?" asked Omar in a plaintive voice. "It was fate. It had been foretold that my dearest friend should be my greatest enemy. The dead always love one. They do no harm."

"What friend have you to fear — you who have never loved any one?" cried the negress. "Stop!" she added, as if struck with a sudden inspiration. "Shall I show you this dear friend who will destroy you?"

"No, no!" cried Omar, trembling like a threatened child. "Amuse me, Kafur. Do not make me sad."

"See!" said the slave, putting a mirror before him. "See the murderer of Hafiz! See the slayer of Leila! See the fratricide! See the accursed! See the wretch for whom there is no longer any peace! Scoundrel, you have never loved any one except yourself. Your selfishness has been your ruin; it will be your death!"

At the sight of the slave glaring at him with contracted features and piercing eyes, Omar was terrified. Light broke upon him. He loathed himself. He tore his hair in his distress. Soon his agony restored him to consciousness. He looked about him, and seeing Kafur in possession of his secret, he burst into a fit of furious rage.

"Stop, child of perdition!" he cried. "I will punish your insolence! I will send you to join your Abdallah!"

Bewildered as he was, he tried to rise. His limbs failed him. He fell against a taboret on which a lamp was burning and overturned it, carrying the lamp with him in his fall. The flame caught his loose robes; in a moment he was ablaze, and shouting for help in frightful agony.

"God is just," cried Kafur. "Abdallah is avenged."

The shrieks of Omar penetrated into the harem, and the women ran to his aid; but at the sound of their footsteps Kafur opened the outer door and disappeared.

XXXI

FRIENDS

While the slaves were hastening to Omar's aid, Kafur saddled Hamama, took a skin of water and some provisions, and galloped through the narrow streets of Jedda. The night was dark and the storm still muttered in the distance.

The child stroked the horse's neck and spoke softly, as if the dumb creature could understand the speech of men. "Hamama, my dear one, take me to your master. You and I will save Abdallah. You know how much he loves you. No other hand than his has cared for you. Help me to find him. We will take him home and he will see his mother. Together they will weep for Leila, and he will be comforted. Do this, dear Hamama, and I will love you." She put her arms around the horse's neck and, leaning far forward, gave full rein. Hamama sped on, straight as an arrow, to the desert. When at dawn they passed an Arnaut camp, the startled sentinel discharged his gun, declaring that he had seen Satan flying past, mounted upon a white horse, and going more swiftly than the eagle from the clouds.

Thus sped Hamama, not pausing, not thinking of food or drink. A strange instinct seemed to lead her to her master. She proceeded straight toward him, regardless of the beaten track, over rocks, through the beds of torrents, across drifts and gullies, God guiding her.

Toward midday Kafur saw Abdallah in the distance, prostrate upon the sand, like one in prayer. "Master! master!" she cried; "we are here."

Neither the child's cries nor the beat of the horse's hoofs aroused Abdallah from his meditations. Hamama stopped, but he did not move. Kafur, trembling with fear, leaped down and ran to him. He seemed to be asleep. His features were transfigured with heavenly joy; a smile of ecstasy was on his lips. Sorrow had forever fled.

"Master, come back to me!" cried the poor slave, clasping his feet. He did not answer. Life had left the earthly shell, and the spirit formed for heaven had returned to its maker.

The faithful Kafur uttered a low cry of unspeakable anguish and, throwing herself upon the sand at his feet, yielded up to God her spirit also.

For a long time Hamama gazed at the two figures anxiously. More than once she touched her burning nostrils to her master's cheek. Then she lay down, and, sinking her head in the sand, with her

eyes fixed upon her two friends, waited for the awakening which should never be on earth.

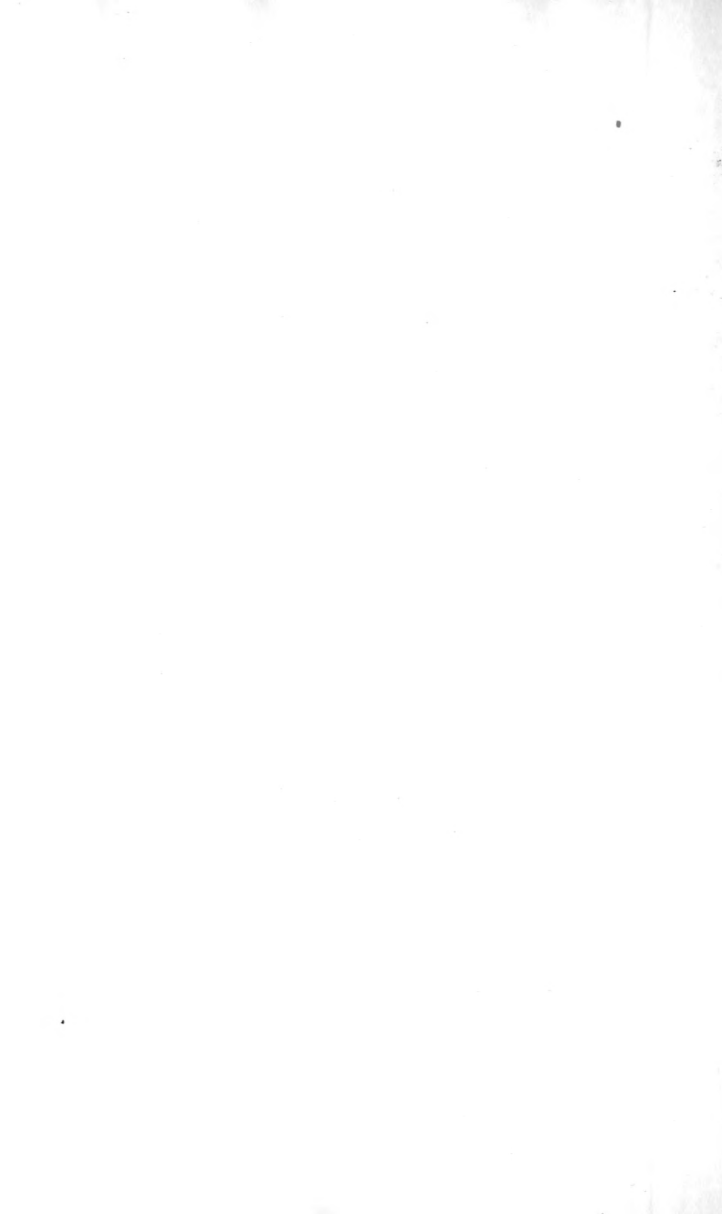
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For many years, travelers who passed the home of Abdallah were accustomed to see there a Bedouin woman of noble presence who devoted herself to the comfort of all who came. When she had watered their camels and attended to their needs she would point proudly to a little corner of the garden surrounded by a circle of stones and covered all the year with flowers. Great masses of trailing jasmine drooped from the branches of the palms and hung in festoons over a tomb where sleep her children and their faithful slave. Abdallah's well is known as the Well of the Benediction, and before the traveler, refreshed, resumes his journey he bows in silence and repeats the Fatihah, full of respect and admiration for this man well named Abdallah, "the servant of God."

PRONOUNCING VOCABULARY

NOTE. The following marked letters will serve as a guide to pronunciation: a, as in *fâte*, *senâte*, *fât*, *ärm.* *ask*; e, as in *mête*, *êvent*, *mêt*, *hêr*; ee, as in *fêet*; i, as in *ice*, *it.* *machine*; o, as in *old*, *ôbey*, *nôt*; oo, as in *fôod*, *fôot*; u, as in *fûr*, *rule*, *pull*; y, as in *babÿ*; s (= z), as in *is*; ou, as in *out*; th, as in *then*; ph (= f), as in *phantom*; qu (= kw), as in *quit*; k = ch in Scotch *loch*, German *ach*. Obscure sounds: ȧ, ȣ. Silent letters are italicized.

Äb däl'läh, 6 ff.	Ėb'lis, 50 ff.	Mäg'h'rëb, 119, 203
ăf'reet, 11 ff.	ĕ mir', 147	Me di'nä, 137
Ä'i shä, 20	Fät'î häh, 21 ff.	Mî nă', 55
Äl Äz'här, 21	Fät'î mã, 122 ff.	Mô ä'wî yäh, 152
ä'lëph, 70	Hä'fiz, 22 ff.	Ö'mär, 5 ff.
Ä'li, 40-43	Häj'i-Män sur', 2	pä shä', 2 ff.
Ä'läh, 9 ff.	Hä li'mä, 5 ff.	pî äs'tër, 2 ff.
Ä rä fät', 55	Hä mã'mä, 95 ff.	Räm ä dän', 168
Är naur', 28 ff.	Hä run'-äl-Rä shid', 73	Rä'zî ël, 66
Äz'rá ël, 163, 196	Hä'san, 111 ff.	sē'quîn, 8 ff.
bän'ian, 39	hăsh'ish, 203	shē'k, 21 ff.
băsh'i-bä zouk', 14	Hô'băb, 68	shē rēef', 6 ff.
Bäs'sô rä, 34	Ĭbn Ä'h'mëd, 1	Shi rāz', 200
Bëd'ou in, 5 ff.	Ĭbn Kë lä'bäh, 83	Shî rin', 60
Bën'i-Ä'mër, 6 ff.	Ĭş'rá fël, 195	sÿn'dic, 26 ff.
bë'zôar, 203	Jëb'el ä'l-Räh'mäh, 55	Tä'if, 86 ff.
bûr nōose', 90 ff.	Kä'a bà, 55	tau, 70
căb'ä lä, 66	Kä füt', 92 ff.	Wä hä'bîte, 30
cä'dî, 28 ff.	Kä rä' Sheitän', 111 ff.	Yëm'ën, 52
Dhul Hîj'jah, 55	Khôs ru', 60	Yü'suf, 5 ff.
du'rô, 30 ff.	kîb'läh, 168	Zëm'zëm, 80
	Kô rän', 3 ff.	Zô be'idë, 73
	Lei'lä, 94 ff.	Zô'här, 67





ARABIAN NIGHTS

ROBINSON CRUSOE



SWISS

FAMILY

ROBINSON

TALES FROM SHAKESPEARE

GULLIVER'S TRAVELS
HERO STORIES



PINOCCHIO

FAIRY TALES, GRIMM
AND ANDERSEN

